



Allison Grayhurst

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

*- completed works from 1988
to 2017 (Volume 2 of 5)*

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017
(Volume 2 of 5)

Outliving the Inevitable
Into My Mortal
Red Thread – Black Thread

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

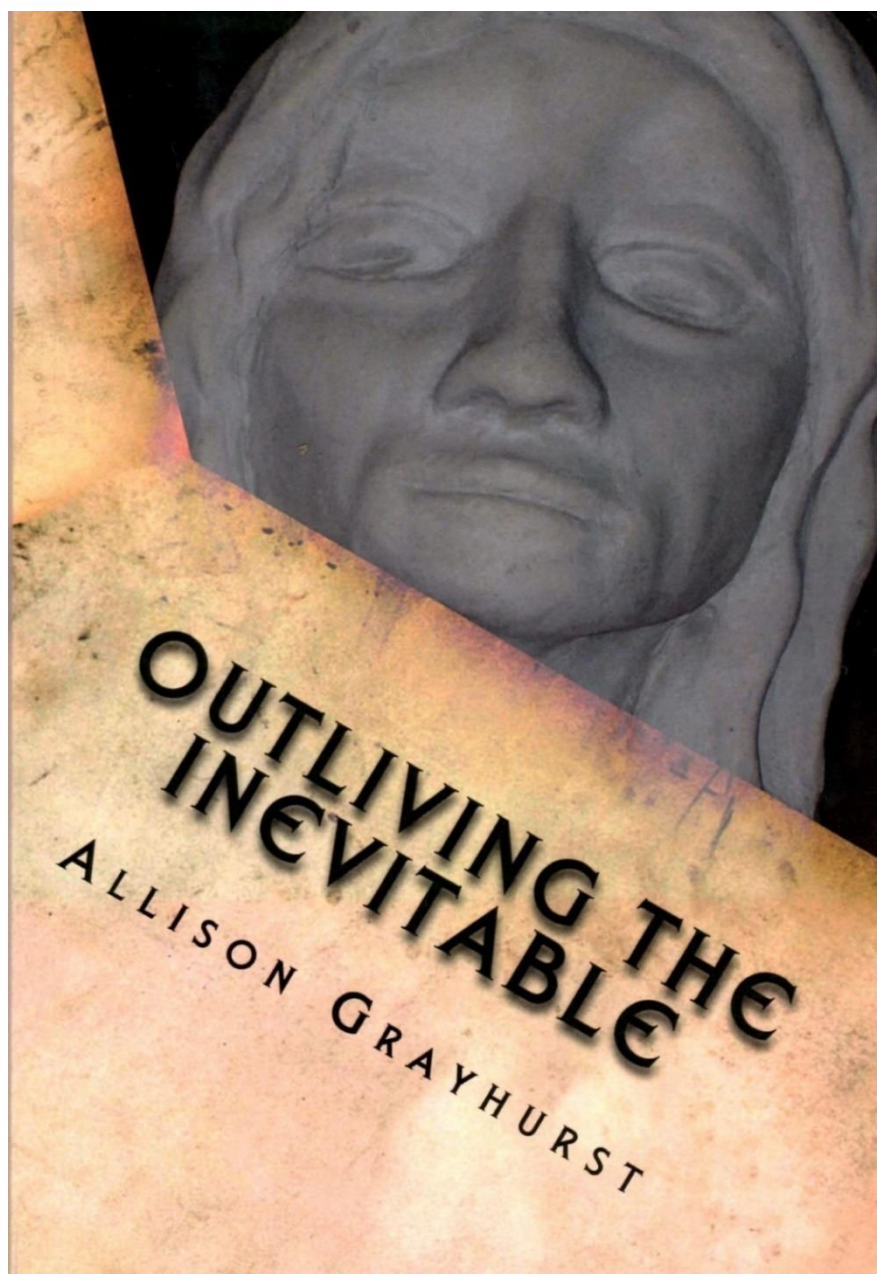
The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 2 of 5)
Copyright © 2017 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art: photo of a stone
© 2015 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 2 of 5)

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1978106642
ISBN-10: 1978106645

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 2 of 5)
by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 7644617



Outliving the Inevitable

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

Outliving the Inevitable
Copyright © 2002 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art (sculpture):
“Vocation” © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
Outliving the Inevitable

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1478220299
ISBN-10: 1478220295

Outliving the Inevitable by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 3933477

Table of Contents

Overall	10
Releasing	11
The Voice We Love	12
Change of Address	13
Message	14
Because of You	15
Faltering	16
Shock	17
On Valentine's Day	18
A New Destiny	19
End of an Era	20
The Holding On	21
I Heard	22
Mother	23
All Hands Down	24
One True Love	25
Every Strand of Hair	26
Resignation	27
The Need to Stumble	28
Outliving the Inevitable	29
Fear	30
My Little Wonder	31
You who saw	32
The God I Follow	33
The Ride	34
On Edge	35
The Ways of Ingratitude	36
With a mother's lips	37
Oasis	38

Let Us Show A Tender Love . . .	39
Clothing	40
Difficult Neighbours	41
Spring Too	42
Finding Direction	43
Making Amends	44
For This Colour	45
Days I Discover	46
Beyond the Grave	47
Stage	48
Sacred Beginnings	49
Dementia	50
Enslaved	51
No Other Way	52
The Last One	53
Small Thing	54
Tunnels	55
A Way To Survive	56
As Mad As Mine	57
As We Walk	58
Her Gift	59
Birthday Vision	60
My Little Girl	61
My Body Goes	62
Child	63
Vocation	64
Other Side	65
What We Know	66
Fatal	67
In One Swoop	68
It is not new	69
At Fifteen Months	70
love is love	71

Keep On Moving	72
Death is losing all limitations.	73
Funeral	74
Rival	75
Keeping In Time	76
Almost a Girl	77
Flurries	78
Otherwise	79
At Last	80
Bellythroes of God	81
Ours	83
Traces	84
Still brimming with awe,	85
High Hill	86
Not Afraid	87
Through the girdle	88
Morning Glory	89
This Love	90
Door With No Dreams	91
In League With . . .	92
Down The Limb	93
Found	94
Shift	95
Girl	96
Call Me By Name	97
Did I Dream?	98
Letting Go	99
In Perspective	100
Down The Rusted Needle	101
By This Love	102
Hit The Mark	103
Salvation	104

Overall

Overall I name the winter
mine. I took the sleeping bird
and let her rest away from the cold.
I opened my eyes to the kindred
shapes of mercy, and found myself reborn.
I held my past inside a thimble
to watch from an impersonal distance.
There I saw a land of curious blood
where death was light, and I listened to the blessings
of faith in its haven of broken wishbones.
There I ate the berries and tasted sand
between my teeth. Like love revisited
inside a prayer, my tale could mount
the beat of the sea and count the waves
of darkness untold. But here in this drift
my petals fade and I grieve my walk without fire
and the tongue caress of the growing soot.
But terror is frail and my vows have shown
to be more than ambition.

Releasing

The fear inside
like an untamed wolf,
takes my peace
and the faith that sustains me
when the winter has run out.
I fear tomorrow,
the shape of this 'till death.
I fear the dream never arriving
and the struggle of survival
being continuous, like a tapeworm
that digests all good things
into its spineless white.
I try to leave this fear and hold
the stronger branch, but it returns
in waves panicked and weary, returns
to take my heart into its circle, cradle
me there like a treasure.
And the path is clear, the path is letting go,
letting in a much brighter trust, brighter still
when all lights are turned out.

The Voice We Love

The voice we love is a symphony amidst
the turbulent waves. It is as faint as hope but
it is the ring we've always cherished.
We have flocked towards the cave
where three animals live
with the sounds of vengeance on their tongues.
We have built the gate to pass through.
We have carved a wondrous
beginning. The silverbell has melted. Talk is nothing
but defining and defining.
The voice we love fills us like a miracle, has laboured
on the Earth too long. Time is an idol that binds
most hands. We were awake when we slipped
from the light into secrecy. All the while, the sudden
death, the funeral and the urn in hand. Now we are
left untied, eternity brewing in us like a mortal wound.
The voice we love is agonizing. It is a veil, a kindness
that harvests a good nation. It is the nerve that nurtures
the grief-stricken and the confused.
The voice we love clothes our togetherness.
It has cured the flames that once reigned violent
through our stream.

Change of Address

I long for the tree I am missing
by the window on a sunny morning.
Shadows are like an empty vessel
and I count the days like coins,
passing frantic from hour to hour
into this good beginning.
I will settle, discover
my happiness on this side of
the threshold.
I will toss my past into the river
and watch it surrender to the undulating tide.
The walls of my home are vibrant with love.
I will walk to the corner, learn
a new road.

Message

In fear I look at the sun
though comforted in my core
by the same bright substance.
In fear I know myself nothing,
unworthy of grace, blending
like the rest into infinite shades
of non-committal grey.
But then peace is found unlike the peace
told about in books, peace buried
deep beneath the piranhas and mirrors,
buried where all the horrors of self-inadequacy
must be walked through to reach its dispelling breath.
In fear my barriers are built like rooms to enter
to stop me from finding the open door that beckons me,
that says to me - lay down your guilt and defenses,
 let self-forgiveness wash you,
 and hold your enemies in open, strong arms.

Because of You

It was the music I always craved,
but dreams were not marked down,
and love was dark as drawn curtains.
But because of you I lived. Because of you
I drank the venom and cure at once.
Because your hand pressed against my
forehead, I learned the strength of my voice.
I learned to dive into the lava-pit of grief and rise
changed, resolved.
Because of your gifts in the summer months,
we made it through with only pennies in our jar
and vague promises in all closed drawers.
Because you loved us under the withered tree,
we found the nectar of our song.
Because you reached when we fell,
all the things we name as good
we now know abide in you. Faith
will warm the broken mother while cradling the weight
of her child.

Faltering

Like a swarm of vicious wasps
the daylight discovers my pulse.
All the children stare with
cold, whiteless eyes.
The wind carries the groans of the dying
and the rooftops are sinking into
their frames.
The taps drip and the clocks tick.
A crow has landed on my driveway.
He calls in time with the wind.
He wears my name under his wing.
The windows are undulating like a river's foaming skin.
I run home from the corner store
and have the wrong key to open the door.
I stand inside the porch and count the fairytales
of my people. There is nothing new to cry for,
but how is it decided who tries,
who mends and who coasts?
And how my mind bends blue on the pitstops
along the road to illumination.

Shock

It comes like this
into the heart, planting
its spikes in the flow.
It wraps its tawny arms
around the chest and presses
with the strength of death.
The fear it gives is easy to bend to
like being caught on a raft nearing
a waterfall. It is as potent
as grief and hides its pulse like a sparrow hides
behind the branches of an evergreen.
In a prayer, in a scream, it can snap
a strong faith and separate flesh from bone.
It can call your name at any time
and change your life
like no pain has done before.

On Valentine's Day

He gives me oxygen,
the golden lamp in isolating winter.
He raises me up like Lazarus
from quicksand. His is the
cord untied, the touch of tender pleasure,
a vehicle of lyric and curved flesh.
Many a day I lived behind the curtain, separated
from the sun, mad as a birthing mother.
My vision was void, as was the giving water
that softened the hard seed. I thought my sound
was smothered and my beautiful pony enslaved.
But with his olive eyes and male love
he unwrapped the dark expanse, nourishing:

I am bound to his appetite and to his comfort.

A New Destiny

**Like a love I cannot speak,
this feeling coils around as a whip,
scorching my skin with its disease.
Break now, like the tense are broken
by gentleness
or the weak are consumed by
merciless rage, raging in waters
terrorizing and sleepless.
Proud of the years spent feasting
on turmoil and prophetic visions. Proud
to savour the call of despair, to have kissed that
face that drove the dream into the heavens.**

**Inertia. On my back, the rolling passions of
frustration and labour, the illness of mourning
and re-mourning the mortal end. Sing like an animal
that feels her offspring warm against her limbs.
Sing for the chance to tremble with surrender,
and live like this - a body
sown in time.**

End of an Era

Nothing comes that near,
only the anger, a pocket
full of pyrite
and the balancing act of last year's
extremes.

Nothing scratches the bone,
no friendship sends me reeling,
no dream of what may be
is worth the dreaming.

But this place is kind,
it has comfort and love
like a full belly in winter time.

It takes my hand, kneading it into
a strange wonderment and meaningful
responsibility.

The books I used to read, the flavour
of solitude and the greater purpose has moved to
another corner, lives like a shadow scurrying around
my backyard. It will soon give me up, leave me
to bend to the will
of what I cannot control.

The Holding On

**When the head of the flower is plucked
 and darkness takes the child's
tender hand, I hold my breath
 under the covers.
For so long I waited for a response,
 and when it came, it took years before I felt
the happy ending. It took me by surprise
like the affinity I felt with the newborn squirrels
 when cupping their soft and trembling bodies.
Over the highest evergreen I race
 with my emblem. I lost
 nearly everything I cared for to gain
 a new soul. I lost a passion and gained
a rage against death and the wilderness outside.
 I drink from the underground and am blessed.
I let out my breath and ask this
 final remnant of grief to be gone.**

I Heard

**The dash at the jugular
makes the wild stars sob, thrusts a hymn
skyward, and over the hills
a drowned frog sways
in a puddle all alone.**

**Forever is the fame
of the storyteller and the mask.
Forever is watching the zodiac turn
and the thumb nails crack,
is killing a smile after a
stranger passes and hiding
our wounds from the mirror.**

**Over the city the caged sun rises.
And the wings we are born with have
all been buried in the marrow of the land.
I feed, the flame feeds and so do the innocent.
Some day the clocks stop and God will be seen
in every beast and in every pavement crack.**

Mother

A gentle goodness
has joined her rhythm.
Her social gift
is why she is so loved,
and for her compassion
that she holds out without
envy or pride.
Hers is a nature that forgives,
making room for the outcast and
the brave.

When my heart arched beyond recognition,
she bore her own ancient wounds
to ease my lonely labour.
When her husband died, the light was cut out
of her eyes and a new light awoke that carries in it
the weight and ravages of death.

I need her like family,
like a good friend
or water in my mouth.
She gives substance to my shadow,
moisture to my pores. She blocks out the sounds
of the noonday world, being for me
someone to talk to and someone to sometimes
lean my fallen dreams upon.

All Hands Down

**Into the seams of non-existence
the cherished expectations of life descend
like a mother who loses her infant to the
turning of time, or a seed its husk
in May's noon light.**

**There are heights to head towards,
compacted by the weight of reality's call,
and a carpet to tread, unfamiliar with your footsteps.**

**In August, the summer will soon be over. It is
the shadow that falls from electrical wires
that makes you sink**

**into a moment without hope. It is watching sparrows
on eavestroughs that removes you from your daily struggles
and puts the flower back in its perfect place.**

**Waking to dread like a wave that pulls you under
every morning, motioned by the same ten-year cause,
and all the time you know the grave awaits you
like every other,**

and it is just a matter now of growing old.

The street is still, even in late morning.

The buttercups have not yet bloomed.

You hear the wounded at your doorstep.

**You have stopped waiting, but even that is not enough
to see you through.**

One True Love

Creeping through the storms
of days and dreams and desperation passing
like an ant carried by the wind
out to the busy traffic.
One and two have been done before
and still there is no flame to heighten any hope.
In the distance, he runs like a dying horse
into this quenchless city. On the grave
he kneels beside, nothing is written.
The dust tells of the years without a garden
and the autumn leaves are quick to fall.
In this battle where his only weapon is 'holding on',
love is a salty lip and the tide that owns him,
carries no shame nor catches any shore.

Every Strand of Hair

The night is missing its lark,
the secret inside the shellfish
has crept out of the waters onto the bank.
Horses tread the fields with broken tails,
into the mirror the anguished have been seduced.
Where the porous Earth is clawed by disillusioned
brides, children bury their favourite toys to
stay for always, underground.
Hungry, but losing the hunger, losing the need
to open the shutters and mince the living ache into
a long-begone mystery. Grappling, but no
longer with the important things like greed and guilt,
but with the stones on the curb,
the overgrown evergreens.
It is the inability to walk, the heaviness
that closes in and houses no air.
It is this cloud and that cloud rewriting
your name - the dry, impossible throat, the false
coin being forever yours.

The graveyards are smelling of spring.
They covered the green hills with straw.

Resignation

They came with a cry of judgment,
drugged by detachment and the effervescent
'now'. They came to rule my dry heart
and seize my voice from its socket.
They told me the chapel
was corrupted with false desires.
I thought this to be reality, a statement
that touched the jugular. But when I touched them
it was as if all colours grew dull
and my pulse drummed slow
and amplified. As if the trinity of love, hope and faith
petrified into a powerless slumber, and the food
that was mine had lost its substance.
They came, carried by a yellow sea,
reptile-like and ravenous.
They promised me an anchor but offered only a
shell. And like the death of miracles,
they clung to me like a metal mesh shawl,
blinding my hope with their diction.

The Need to Stumble

I drop the pattern.
I say it is enough
of being frightened
of the worn shoe
and the empty bank account,
enough of bitterness
and wasted expectations.
I drop the gripping pain
of needing someone to ease my pockets
in this physical money-ruled world,
of not trusting the deeper light
nor honouring the many gifts of my household.
I drop the mental bloodshed,
the blame I inflict behind closed curtains
towards others for not reflecting my ideals.
I drop the hypocrisy of coveting a generous hand,
of hurting my love with bad philosophy.
I drop the gravity of existence,
of sitting on the floor waiting for that phone call,
and holding my breath when others let out
a word.

Outliving the Inevitable

As lions groom
in African lands, so kissing
bends the intent of the assassin,
making safe the fangy mouth
and the weedy waters.
I will lie down in my heaven
though the light breeds in me like the guts of an
unhealable wound and I fail the simple rule of forgiveness.
I will dig out the bones from the sands
and scissor the serpent's tongue.
Drunk on complaining, on naming my cloud
my crown, I will find a new rhythm in the oceans
and sleep like one just born. I will talk
to the half-mast moon and translate
the crows' territorial song.
The old dog snarls and the pigeons seem happy
resting on the window sill.
If I must return to witness the same casualty,
return to tread the sewer's underbelly, then I will bury
some love in the fall and call the small graces
my exotic fruit.

Fear

**It calls from the depths of tomorrow
like a drought that cracks
the once-dependable earth.
It lives out there, drives
the nine-to-fivers from their beds
to rush the highways and miss
the monarch.
It has found my hearth
and meets my faith head on.
In hunger, in the bandage of rising debt,
and in once again dipping my toes over this
treacherous edge, it will not let
me go. It drills its home into my belly
like a fatted worm, and year after year my prayers
cannot wound its faceless pulse.
It has become familiar though I promise
to feed it no more. It is my blindness,
though to all other eyes it is a blessing
that should drive me to conform.
I know it when I sleep and rise, but
I also know the tale of the lilies in the field, and
I believe in heaven.**

My Little Wonder

By the light there broke
a heart of no comparison.
Hers was the eye of the mountain,
the vibration of the tides, and
the colours of the Mediterranean fish.
Hers was the lost star found,
the end of revenge, the juice of our single moon.
In a womb where her legend almost died
and the hangman knelt before the doctor's foot,
I made a promise to her land and the sigh
of her raving waters. I marked her tree in our
backyard and bent to wash her hair.
Hers was a boat that bore no time, a leaf
in the midnight air.
My old joy is the shell of this new one,
for she is my workgloves and cathedral.
Hers are footprints on the sun.

You who saw

**You who saw the
morning fall on leaves
all rotted and brown but
kissed this darkest turn
and threw your coins to the clouds.**

**You who loved and always learned
that love is nothing earned.**

**You who opened your heart to a child
and let her wed and weave her own.**

**You who felt the wanting grave
when you felt the skeleton hand of a friend
unchained.**

**You who beheld your wife like a sunrise
and gave her everyday a new light to live for.**

**You who are so beautiful and always beginning,
like a band of circling swallows, like a whale
first seen in the wild, like the scent of home.**

**You are a thousand good men on a morning walk,
the chapel bell's waking call, sweet and deep
as the true belief in miracles.**

The God I Follow

**The God I follow
is the breastbone of all beginnings,
the gallop in the maimed animal,
the grief that murders any half-measures,
and lifts all eyes to meet the sun.**

**The God I love is love
unexplained, strange as the depths
of the oceans and strong as gravity.
This love swims through chimneys and air vents,
cloaks the guilty and the saved, is reborn
in every merciful eye.**

**The God I follow is forgiveness,
blind to all but the true measures of the heart,
is the arrow that hits the hungry
and bends to the burn of divine surrender.**

**The God I love is personal as the body,
is a lifetime pasture of rich anguish
and gentle revelations.**

The Ride

Again the stars were plucked
from her mind and the world below
leapt up and sponged her with its flame.
That summer she made a wish upon her chains
and walked the deserted farmyards.
The ravens followed her through the weeds
and heat, keeping up conversation. At night
she sang to the beating of the rain and stroked the head
of the dead bug in her pocket.
She was neither of the mountains nor of the desert.
She was calm as crazy sometimes gets, and the thunder
hissed out her name as the June's morning rays
danced her a sermon. She talked
to her shadow when the birds had gone,
and her fingernails were brittle as cracked ice.
On the seventeenth day her breath collapsed with
the rising sun as the cobwebs about her sparkled, stirred
by a sweetened wind.

On Edge

Recoiling then seizing the slanted hero
who lacks virtue or self-reproach
but reaches her destination just the same.
In this room where the flies are bent on suffering,
and cruel words ambush you when you sleep,
the dead play tricks with your long-lived grief
and the good light is crossed out like a lifetime
wasted.

But faith fills the void when you find it,
and know it like an exotic frog's poisonous skin
or the sky after hours spent in the cellar.
And faith is never found
only once but must grow its wings again
and again.

In this room where defeat has clawed into my mind
with the same old tune,
I hold up my head and wait for heaven
to throw me a flame and let
the milk pour.

The Ways of Ingratitude

Scattered like rain
over the cathedral steps.
Years spent among the voices, outcast,
unhinged from the world.
The night is pale in my hands.
The fields are drenched with the quiet moans
of judgment. I live in the sewers
of diseased despair and broken expectations,
in the cold wilderness of reducing hatred,
clutching the key to release all my woes
by disparaging another.
Somewhere the light breaks, but I am stuck
with the television glow.

With a mother's lips

**I felt the ceremony of the stars
soothe my tired throat.
I felt the sun's fire in my hand
when I bent in the direction of tomorrow.
My child is like
a choir at my doorstep,
seducing my joy with her own.
My child is without enemies
or days, having no secrets from those
she loves. She can carve a jewel
from a crayon, and with her first embrace,
she sanctifies each morning.
With a mother's heart
I tell the fruitflies of my blessing.
Money and mortality
cannot be true, but only
the music in her grey eyes, and the movement
of her small hands at play.**

Oasis

Love I know
in the spilled earth of
my garden where
there are two types of roses
and a hundred-year-old sin
washed by the shade of
my evergreens.
Peace rises like perfume
in the tortuous summer heat,
and always it takes me into a haven
of rainbow hues. Always
I catch myself sitting and wondering
how this came to be - a child,
a husband, four cats and these flowers.
Green with grass and weeds, the yard is
my cushion in the shadows, and the wooden fence
where the blossoms creep is my guaranteed
longed-for autonomy.
I pick a tomato in my garden then caress the head
of an uncurled centipede.

Let Us Show A Tender Love . . .

otherwise the moon would be
half a shadow and the wasp,
a sandbox companion . . .
otherwise a gentle wind would
scorch the birds and seventy years
of staying alive would be ineffectual . . .
otherwise the rain would die and
I would bear my bed like the torturer's glove . . .
otherwise, the trees would crouch
to the dead earth and the eyelid of God
would remain forever closed . . .
otherwise the child would plan his days
by astrology's chart and the broken hearted
would long no more . . .
otherwise home would be a filthy cave
and my bath could never drain,
but would remain a stagnant
murky cold . . .

Clothing

An angel beads my hair
and shades me from the roaring rain.
A flowerpot is turned over like a night
lived alone on a mountain or like
the degutted smile of feigned generosity.
I see a rich pasture left uninhabited.
In my sleep I move like a hare
over those hills and dandelions.
When I wake it is the voyage
that sometimes drowns me.

Difficult Neighbours

It is hard enough to
relinquish privacy, to love
the tilted child running across
our lawn and shake hands with
the thinning curve of a shadow,
and yet by the standards demanded,
love must be most given when
the enemy appears, when the stone has hit the window
and the fence is knocked down.
Love must be that thing that rises
like a balloon above the forest fire,
and rises when every instinct bares its claws.
And we, the givers of the jewel have no excuse
to hate from inside closed doors,
nor to offer our smiles only when it suites us.
Now is the time spoken of, when the sandbox has
been robbed, when the treeline has been plucked,
and boundaries need to be set.

Spring Too

In this year when lovers lay
fossilized in engulfing anger
when only the born-rich thrive in the noonday air,
is the same year of leavened kindness,
when parents scatter the goods from their pockets
to teach the lesson of surrender.

The mountain is rejoicing as it merges
with the rising flood. The cornfields
are trembling with fire like a beacon in
miles of darkness. Heaven is a tale that never ends,
is a lifelong pilgrimage, is the tongue
of a fattened snake.

Spinning, the sun, the quenching breeze.
Spinning, the crow on the chapel tower
and the woman digging in her yard.

It is nice to feel sand between fingers,
to kiss the cheeks of a loving child.

Home is an autographed prize,
is starlight swirling like a kaleidoscope
in the folds of my mouth.

Finding Direction

It is the happiness
of the sages I seek when
climbing out windows onto rooftops
or when walking my child to the park.
It is not the dry wilted lip I fear, but the
drifting from day to day, bloated on
tireless resentments and a rising despair.
The path is in my hands, is wide awake to my voice.
At night, I remember my father and rhythms that happened
so long ago. Summer is almost here
and the sand blows across the grass.
Today I am trying for a different approach to this nadir,
I am kicking up the floorplans and heading for new bait.
I see the red cardinal from my sliding glass door.
Faith is hard and sunrise never seems to arrive.
But it is a spell to be wooed into stagnation,
and it is better to face my inner gloom
than to sleep and keep the coin untossed.

Making Amends

The night is caught
like a mouse's tail caught
between a cat's shining teeth.

Once I believed in recognition
and the glory of making a name.
Now it's only time before me,
and the ashes of my loved one.

The world and its shallow passions
is not a place to put my hopes in,
is only the grand flame of 'me'
and my short span.

Loving a child is what matters.
No words, no pat-on-the-back,
no cry out for justice or the soft sniffles
of fickle brilliance.

Soon I will join a tree or even a flower.
The sloping roof with the snow on top -
that is stillness.

The wind pushes its way under my door
like a maddened bird.
I have no ambitions. I have only a voice
that must continue its singing.

For This Colour

A shadow passes
like steam from a mug.
The everyday blindness
of being alive, I wear like a bow
in my hair.
Into my hand a snowflake falls,
repeating patterns of intricate beauty.
Too many times I heard the words
without being changed - for a minute moved into rapture
and then turning back from where I came.
Too many hours I ran the same track,
torn from my sleep like an infant torn from
its mother's breast.
Thunder beats against my eardrums,
the rope falls from the gravel edge.
This shape is the food that lamps my tower,
as the sigh of the sea lies contained
in my daughter's eyes.

Days I Discover

**Days of sand between the toes
and laughter in my soup.
Days of much affection
and the soft giving smile
when long-held hopes are being realized
and the house is painted new.
Days of happy mornings and stained-glass angels
glowing against the window.
Days of gratitude and the growing of
a child's spectacular heart.
Days when what is is enough
and the future feels like the first day
of a life-long love.**

Beyond The Grave

If all the seeds fell like blood
or blood like seeds into
the ravenous earth and time
was a wagging tail in the dark
then I would know that death would come
by any reason and be a blessing
all on its own. But as it is, death is
the hollow spot of the living - some with
grief and others with fear, and me myself,
it is memory that unbuttons the flesh of my chest
to leave me poked and burning.
It is the hill I climb and stumble
down its rocky incline whenever I return
if only once a day
to meet death's stalking eyes.
It is not my heart that fails me,
but the things outside
like the shadow on the neighbours' window
and the frightening madness of so many strangers.
It is here and there like an insect
on my wall, like the fatherly love
I'll never find again in another's eyes,
but is with me in the coming autumn air,
and in the quietude of these joy-filled days.

Stage

No warmth in my
shoes. No gently touching
of my eyelashes.

The crater has left its imprint
and my only child is weeping.

Love has sunk below the line, grows painful as
a thousand papercuts. Why is there this
push into the primal darkness, where everything
is surface and small and contagious? Why can't
we, of all lovers, overcome?

Touch my fingertips, tell me we can breathe it out
and return to the depths of our true connection.

Tell me we are brave enough to walk away
from this cancer breeding side,
face each other like we use to,
free of defense and the bitter masks
of useless pride.

Sacred Beginnings

I love you under water
in the crescent cracks of rocks
where the roots of the rose begin,
inside the weather's tailspin
where you colour my sleep
with your dance, and loving you
is worth more than I could ever offer.
I love you beside the coral reefs, even when
the serpent and shark are near. I love you
in the sandbox as we make our miracles
daily, pointing at every passing bird.
I love you with yesterday's dinner
in the fridge, before and after the starlight falls.
I love you in each bubble we blow, in every fever we share,
and in our synchronized laughter, gracing
this mother and daughter sphere.

Dementia

How does the breath know it
is not water, or some other
element to rename the senses?
How do you plant and minister
the love of dawn into the ground?
How do you carve a coin from wood
or turn your tea into coffee, make
a fossil from a flesh-covered bone?
In the days of the dead mare the river
was darned with weeds. From the eyes
of an old woman, I saw the milkyway in a stone
and grew to love the quietude of the woods.
Born and then lost to all vows. Eighty-five years
of seeking salvation in clay and from
all the little stories told by like-minded friends.
Then it is an impersonal room, poetry laced with paranoia,
and your limb hacked off at the thigh.
Then it is those who love you praying
for a quick delivery onto death, and those who
know you, holding your hand and telling you
thank-you for our time, for those Sunday phone calls,
telling you how deeply it hurts
to say this last goodbye.

Enslaved

It is in the language of the insects
I hear in the morning time
when I hear my daily calling
pass through me like the ticking of a clock.
It is these words that stand on stilts
and glove my future in the shell of impossibility.
It is ghosts I look to in my sleep
when my blood is sinking into the sheets
and there is no voice to teach me the way of God.
Floating face up in the fires of a tiring game
that lives and lives no matter the revelations
or the pain I learn to forgive.
It is a black eye in the summer,
a candy caught in the throat.
Where can I turn? What terror
breathes as large as the ocean
and will not find its tomb?
It is the flavour of unholy suffering
that has burnt the bandage of hope.
It is barren as a subway crowd,
like a broken kaleidoscope, or
a death remembered
and not the life.

No Other Way

Is there a voice
as sharp as a cut nerve,
or an answer to unravel
this relentless groove?
Is there divinity in stagnation
or purpose to a dead womb?
Can even a great love withstand
evenings of always the same
bleak gestures - a snapped jugular,
a lost future?
Is it burning like an enemy in our closet
or like a miracle denied?
Is it a triggered revolver in the pit
of all our youthful promise or a transmuting faith
that rides this kissless wound?
If we give this back or give it up will it be
the bed to hold us, will it nurse our roots
to flower, or drop us unwanted?
Will there be rescue from this slumbering void
or just the iris of our common eye looking, looking back
at its old and destroyed self?

The Last One

I know my name
like I know the way
I was brought towards
to be saved and made
imperfectly whole.
I know there never will be answers,
there is only faith.
I know that type of light is heavier
than grief, heavier than a pound of eternity
thrust upon the shoulders,
heavier still because it is light
because it is pure and utter mystery
that will never be explained -
unfastening the soul, coating it
with a thick and binding love.

Small Thing

Small chaos
surrounded by the plain,
brings flavour to the ordinary,
brings dance to the immobilized
and pattern to the monotone.
Small thing glistening
like a heart inexperienced in hope
but wanting the privilege.
Small pain attached to the nerves
slicing away all good pleasure,
making solace impenetrable.
Small thimble that holds the glory
and spills over onto the soft ground.
Small night that doesn't have an imprint
but has ability for irreversible change.
Small window I look through
seeing what is small
and wanting nothing big.

Tunnels

I have lost what was left
in the tunnels, and wandered
like a millipede through miles of underground.
The burn of cold brick, the taste of damp air
in my lungs, my skin against concrete.
Friction, losing what's left, but finding
a different pattern to follow, finding interest
in each detail of the maze, finding fascination as I age,
wandering through the narrow medieval fields,
knowing there is no exit,
and I am here - immutable, almost
dammed.

A Way To Survive

A butcher's knife
wielding at living flesh to accommodate
someone's feast, is like
a quarrel behind a condemned man's eyes
and the ingratitude of those born beautiful.
Rise from the stone,
out of the slumber of guilt
and inadequacy, rise as
the lilies between the weeds
and know that nothing matters
but the flame. The debris and mud and
labour of our hours spent motionless,
defeated in the dream, is just an exile
from the necessary drink, is part of the sea
that takes us in under its waves
of chaotic waters.
Often I have stood naked and
have seen nothing more than my shadow. Often
I return to the window, bearing my memories like a shield.
The sky is my witness. Let me fall in love all over again,
let my head be turned, and let the world outside be
my saved translucent spider.

As Mad As Mine

Grief is cold as the world
without a wish, riding
the waking land.
I saw the hounds trace my footsteps.
I believed in an everafter,
and the shore was my mansion to fight for.
I drove from the river onward,
looking for a season to change me.
The miracle, the terror before the miracle,
is the salty flavour of my blood.
Sudden love stinging the throat. Sudden
happiness to renew the cage of day-to-day drudgery.
I cry like a seal who has lost her pup to the killer whale.
Tomorrow is not a void
but a temple of what is held sacred today.
Everytime I answer, I lose.
But when I am holding my breath,
caressing the slit throat of all my hopes,
then and there my eyes and ears
have learned the voice of
golden heaven.

As We Walk

I spent an hour listening
to the grey and cooling sky, and the blackbirds
that gathered low.

We are but gestures sown
by particles of love, desire and greed.
Few are one tapestry, most are a bit of
all three.

There was a plague in my eyes
that has thinned my expectations, but
I am better.

Being in love this long is like a voyage
underwater, swarming with glorious and
dangerous beings.

You will always be the one to hatch my breath,
the catching flint when I am shipwrecked,
and the good thing I can hold up willingly to the light.
We have been shown there is no grave,
only the mourning. We have been shown
it is the aging in front of each other
that makes aging wonderful.

I no longer worry about what I am going to say
because there is you, with the scent of autumn
strong in your hair.

Her Gift

She opens up the cupboard door
and smiles the beautiful smile.

She moves across the hardwood floors,
focused as a hawk.

There is something in her I cannot touch,
that has lived long beyond her short ten months.

She claps her hands and passes the ball. She waves
goodbye and washes the stains from my heart.

She is calm as a resting lion cub,
sure of her place beneath the sun. She is
a good friend, marked by her own brand of humour
with a love so bright it strips anew
even the roots of my belonging.

Birthday Vision

Under this familiar banner
of autumn and Halloween.
The gull who died on the side of the road
was to me the drum-drum-drum
in the marrow of my bones and the truth that
my prayers can heal no one.
I am tired of the clouds and the chapel sermon
infiltrating the beads of my shower.
Senseless is the cloud, the song of guilt
and the selfish dark night. I can see
there is nothing to say to anyone about
the cold limb burnt at the veins.
Smooth, nothing has been smooth like the skin of a dolphin.
All I lack is painting circles, repeating in my head.
In the land of late October, it has not been easy
to find the starlight.
There is so much, by now, I thought I would have done.

My Little Girl

My little girl
is the flesh of creative love.
She keeps in time with
the rhythm of her muse
and unlocks the special light
in her pocket.

My little girl
is the warmth of an unhatched egg,
like being in the comfort of home
while watching a rain storm -
she is summer on the porch,
the soft evening glow on a newborn's skin.

My little girl
is young, but carries
a deeply-rooted compassion in her eyes.
She is crazy as a painter's erratic brushstroke
and funny as a comedian's best stance.
Her will is her hunger and also the music
of the rain. She loves the butterfly and the
cat, loves to caress the head of the thin-haired infant.
Her colours are yellow and grey, like the autumn sun
and the sea without the sun on an overcast day.
My little girl is tender and free and
I am grateful to know such a one and to have her be
my little girl.

My Body Goes

Through the blinds
my body goes soaring
touching the hawk and
choppy clouds.

It dips through the misty air
holding hands with the winter.
It opens its mouth to taste the wind
and sees a balloon float by.

Then it lands in dunes of sand
covered in unmarred snow.

A wren's small footprints lead it down the
slope into the underbrush where a
hound dog has curled into a sleeping ball.

It tiptoes past to the sideroad where
two children are singing their ABCs
and making angels in the snow.

When back in flight, it rides the twilight's rays
into this room and leans
to sip a drink of cold coffee, tasting
like liquorice candy.

Child

As wounding as
the stars reflected in
the river, yours is a beauty
too big to embrace.

You are the everlasting miracle
that walks these floors each morning
and day, marveling at every turn.

Your easel is full of yesterday's colours.

There are songbirds under your bed, and in the closet,
are assorted hats that call to you to try on
and wear down the hall.

You are the syrup on my toast,
the first tulip of spring.

Before you, I was too afraid to dance with freedom,
crippled by a servant mood.

You are the open door where teddy bears
dream and live - a soft, unhindered love
that cures the hardness
overpowering any room.

Vocation

Two hands unable to sing,
and visions burned by the lack
of time. The sensation of clay
under my fingernails,
the smooth and malleable unconscious dream
pure as lovemaking,
rich as a four-course meal.

It spells my name in its grey thick ointment,
calling me back to conceive a child.
It says, "after death and letting go, put back on
these worker's clothes and bring glory to form"

Because it is time to open a window
and collect stories by the river.
It is time to alter the day, bring the
light back into my body.

It pulls me into its soft embrace,
and I think I am ready
to remember.

Other Side

Killed in the cloud

that ripples softly.

Believing we would be triumphant
made it so, and being dead we

learned a new way to rise and praise.

The music lies down in the seas,

so I hear the dolphins hum

and see octopi sway.

Madness is part of our heritage

but also our navigating star.

Whisper of the wonder we walk through each day.

Away from the dull chaos of the common bar

this is a new plateau, a hawk

in our backyard.

Up and dancing, the ground and air

join together to say -

we were never alone.

What We Know

Hold the heart in a field of salt
and heal the bitter taste,
for all has been like
the crossing of the guards
and the moon is shining brightly on my back.
I believe in your song but
the flood has risen and no help came,
and the chapel denied us as we pulled
the weeds from our prison and grew ourselves
a garden of togetherness.
Being here, I still don't know the name of
any star but I am content enough
loving you, and feeling the daily explosive joy
of raising our child.
There are no fists to clench or rooftops to
yell our resolve from. It is not a giving up
but a path of no resistance. Work
and grief may leave us alone. Work
and possibly we'll slumber out of this quicksand. Work
and the maggots may not pierce our skin.
For soon we, and all of we, will be dead, and today
is so very important.

Fatal

When I saw your blank eyes
and your face terrible and thin,
I thought of a night with no mercy,
I thought of a new form of life that only
the slowly dying can know, that tortures
the wearer like having no exit from a haunted house.
I thought how quickly my father died without
the tight throat and mindless whispers, and of you,
long ago with your blue eyes, clear and independent,
swimming with the wonder of discovery.
I remember your walk - giant, focused - that now
with only one leg, you will never know again.
I thought of those nights spent watching your hands
bring strength and comfort to the clay
like they would to a lost child.

Now I praise you with those same hands, frustrated,
trembling, searching for your mother tongue.
I praise you with the blankets pulled off
your dying limbs, forgetting my name
and the reasons why I love you - you,
always so brave an individual, now like a hymn
torn away from the nadir of its voice, away
from the zenith of its song.

In One Swoop

**I was lying under
the white ceiling, my
heart torn open like
the skin of a Clementine. It
was air I needed and the
blessing of a child. I found
my way past tender ambition
and hopes I never had the commitment
to work for.
I found the shade of the sea
in my bones and there was a line I drew
and crossed.
Every winter the same sickness rises
like a worm through my intestines.
It preys on both my
ego and spiritual vocation. It speaks of dust
and loss and other lifetimes.
Give me blood, cut my nails and call me
clear across this continent.
It is what I was born for - to ride
the horse to the edge and then to let go.**

It is not new

**to hold out a hand
and find something dead
cupped inside.**

**It is not love that loves
through essential compromise.**

**It is God we speak to
everytime we verbalize,
and God will mend even the ones
who think they're saved.**

**It is the cracked jaw,
the splintered bone and expressions
of boredom and greed that
disease a child's innocence.**

**It is how we deal with the senselessness of being
that makes us either deny or realize
a gift of spiritual wonder.**

At Fifteen Months

She has learned to walk and sing.

She stares out from her
calm eyes, watching the other
children move to and fro.

When music arrives, her
whole body starts keeping the
rhythm, bound to it like a bird
is bound to the wind.

When she laughs, all the world's brightness
fills her mouth and resides there.

When she cries, it splits my heart.

Gentle and solid, she balances beautifully
her warmth and will, like a child sent
from the throes of a living mercy,
like a long-held hope weighing
sweetly in my arms.

love is love

Love is love, full of thirst and suffering
but stronger still than
the devil's lyre. Once
my world was a wound of sleepwalking
and intangible thoughts.
Today, there is a voice under the sheets
that has learned the language of my private choir.
God seems distant, farther than imagination can conjure,
but I know it is only a fossil for tomorrow's hands
and a new facet of a living faith.
Sometimes my ribs are drowning in foreign blood
and my hopes like colouring books
are torn. Sometimes I want to feel the light touch of a finger
and catch the nectar of kind breath.
Love is love, longing for more, longing
to know its kiss has reached another's heart,
and then to have it returned
like never before.

Keep On Moving

It is not over
though the wood is wedded to the ground.
It is not over when we rise
to find a flood around our house
and see the empty schoolbus.
There are miracles that fill the barren fields,
and in the slaughteryard
somehow God must give love.
Sex has lost its purity and starlight has
slipped far below the waves.
But still the goal is to be consciously free,
to be the truth we were given.
The goal is to let other people's thoughts die to our own,
to befriend the ever tightening noose of time.
It is hard to travel free of ghosts,
integrated as the sky.
It is hard as the stones we pocket and the secrets
we carry into our sleep, holding
our entrance into the coming day.

Death is losing all limitations.

Death is the yellowed photo and the
atlas burned. Death I have seen
in the old and young,
in animal's eyes and when
the spring permeates the ground.
Each death is different,
some only wound, others alter
the chemistry of the marrow. Some are long
like a cloud passing over an already grey sky and some
are quick as a terrorist's bomb
or a tiger's tearing jaws.
Before I fall asleep, stormy carcasses fill my room,
but it is not bad weather, only the afterglow
of so much sunshine. Love bonds beyond
the clammy cheeks and the greying mouth.
Maybe now the dead fully understand what was once too
foreign for the living to fit through.
Maybe now the complete connection can occur,
and death turns wonderful and sweet
when we hover above the insanity of loss
and inexpressible grief.

Funeral

The photograph of her face -
bold as one who knows herself completely -
as the bagpipes blew
and I could hear her voice
gently humming the tune.
There were strangers everywhere
in the crowded room of griever and
in her daughter's eyes. It was
only her
I loved and her I will miss.
She cradled the land ever so deeply
and dreamt elaborate and graceful worlds,
etched in the smoothest of stones.
She is shared by so many.
But for me, my love was personal,
and it is not so easy to hold
this severed vine of gold, not so easy to let go
of her rare and destined heart
that helped give shape to my own.

Rival

The war is a cell divided
against itself, it is
a hatching demon breath,
smoke in the cupboards, a break in the sky.
Drown me in the light and let
this leprosy be clipped.
It pours through the phone line
at a deafening pitch and twists
my flesh like an old shoestring.
My hand is thrust into this insect's nest.
I am back to the thin branch and the foul
stench of thirst and cruel senselessness.
Back to the depolarized constellations
and the gem crushed by a lizard's curled-up tongue.
Back to a misshapened childhood
of sibling grief, and the slow, unconquerable gait
of someone else's money.

Keeping In Time

Along the gates of afterlife
where poles are swinging in the storm,
I am now a woman with all my evil
and attempts to do good etched
under my eyes. I have a lover,
I have a child and my house is cluttered
with bandages and parcels and recordings
of obscure but revolutionary songs.
Miles of moonlight over the graves,
a turtle leaps into an incoming tide.
Half a world away my senses grow
and my voice is milked by a semi-kindred soul.
There are curtains, the TV and the silken fur
of my favourite cat.
Nothing wounds that hasn't reached.
With every new day the salt must be replenished
and the labouring waves of devotion, renewed.

Almost a Girl

We play with sounds,
making a flower out of tissue paper.
She bounces a ball,
miming the harmony of its rise and fall.
She paints with strokes
that calls the orange seed to bloom,
and all the while she dances
to the starlight's tune, loving
its brave expression.
We read tales told in rhymes
and sniff the picked herbs
in our garden.
Every morning we count spoons
and watch the boys play next door.
She knows her colours purple and blue,
plays Boo! behind the door.
Her body beats an ancient symphony of affection,
loving easily my inviting arms.

Flurries

I have watched under a
silent sky. The seasons moved
like molasses over my skin.
Not a bird came singing, but faith
was always renewed.
They say it is winter and the snow
is as beautiful as a good friend's smile.
I think I hear the sounds of the lake, though
it is so far away.
I hunger to see my father's ghost.
I have put on a new sweater.
The house is empty, even
the voices next door are quiet.

I can love no other,
but only stay, planted
in this frozen ground.

Otherwise

I would make room for truth
to quicken me, and laziness
and anger would lose the reins.

my dreams would be pure
and my sense of justice would never be offended.

when the bank account ran out
and tension forked into my throat and
the trees have lost their glory, then I
would be humbled and know the way
is to let go.

my death-wish would be
but a small ripple in my soup,
and all my passions would be holy.

the bitter wrinkle would
not distort my face and forgiveness would
be part of my unconscious nature.

when the toilet floods I would laugh
and I would be grateful for the great loves I have.

there would be no fear of doing good
and I would kiss the faces of my enemies with pleasure
and with quiet wonder.

At Last

At last I hear God's gale
rustling the magazine stands.
I feel the faith of a shellfish under
water and will reach this way into
a fabulous tomorrow with the stars as
my blueberries, and the darkness as
my branded peace.
At last the voyage needs no destination.
I see grasshoppers on every mid-summer leaf.
The barriers have been lifted and the thief has
managed nothing.
At last I have no dream to gain
or platform to paint. I am feeding, and food
is all I need.

Bellythroes of God

The rawness behind the mastery,
the way to speak of the bellythroes
of God and kneel while doing so,
kneel not from the hindered place of
God and I,
but from knowing it is all God even
your self is God, and you are and God is love wider than air,
more abundant than eternity. Kneel
because this love is both personal and absolute,
it is reaching to you alone while
spreading thick the blaze of stars.
Kneel because for a fraction of a second you
know it is never God who stops giving, but it is
you who stop receiving, you who block
the constant flow, you who deflect it with your habits,
boredom and fear. That God is always there but that
you only feel God's presence when you decide to,
when you let the barriers crack and split a
sliver in your daily husk of coasting existence.

Sometimes too, when grief becomes the sword this
soft word never prepares you for - when with this word grief
you begin to hear not only the sorrow but also the scream
that hits like a hurricane pulling a child from
your breast. And there it is grief in all its monstrous
proportions. There it is, the very thin line
between God and chaos
with the soul's ultimate peace at stake. Faith is the bridge.
For the faithless in grief would either go mad or harden like
little pellets in a mid-February storm. The faithless would
not know how to cope and stay whole.

Kneel because you know God is the dream we all seek
whether we it know or not.
God is the goal of all our striving -
the financier nestling in the fat, protective arms
of worldly security, the intellectual
devouring ideas like solutions,
ideas as a path to lead to some mysterious
ever-complex cerebral calm,
the soccer player feeling her victory in her torn ligaments
and in the shafts of her sweaty hair -
We look but we do not name it as such.
We look but God still is not the priority,
not the weight of all our emotions and thoughts,
not the bulk of our dilemmas, and not
the subject of our intimate talk.
God is something to hide from, the one hope
we all innately look for in prayer books
or in politicians. But God is not something
to be looked for, God is simply something to see.
God is my cup of restive tea. God in my shopping cart.
God in the standard and not-so-standard things -
in a teenager or a brick wall,
in an animal's unexpected tenderness or a dull piece of box.
God is not something to discover
but something to finally, wholeheartedly acknowledge.
God is and we are when we embrace
the boundless directed compassion of God,
when we realize that God is the only one thing we need
that can grow to be stronger than gravity
and the cold desperation for survival.

Ours

When darkness fell
like soot upon my lashes,
when the medicine cabinet was open
and my addictions were spoiled,
when the bird feeder was rigged
and dreams were all I owned,
your smile raised me
and gave me dominion over
the music. You were my
mansion in the bloody winter before
adulthood, and somehow your hands
built me a ship to cross the heartache and the void.
Now I live with you in a world
of our child, in the miracle of togetherness
and in the opening
of tomorrow's years. We moved out of the wilderness
and found that love is all that can keep
our light from sinking. And so, our bed
is warm and our child is
as tender as a tiny finch, and just
as full of song.

Traces

In the whisper of tomorrow
the wood is burning and the trees
have died. A swallow is perched
on the fence as the twilight nears.
I have taken the hinges
off the door, waiting to see what enters,
waiting as my hunger works like
midnight in my stomach, dictating
the flavour of the coming stars.
Daunted, branded by the heaving wind,
alone with my prayers and the telephone turned
up high - will the answer come before the grave
or will obscurity greet me every new dawn
like a hand unheld or a gate torn down?
It is humming, the sound of this underground sorrow.
It hums of poetry and the earth and the bug eaten leaves.
It burns and cannot bloom in bookstores, will not bloom
in the silence of a single decade or in the darkness of
a closed drawer.
Outside, the children go inside, readying for sleep.
I tread waterways in my mind
and send my kisses mid-air.

Still brimming with awe,

**and cuddling sweet against your
father's welcoming cheek.**

**Still bizarre in the light of
your unique humour and stubborn
as the apple tree is strong in the
happy earth.**

**Turning One tomorrow and all the things
you've learned in that span -
to say a word, to grow in kindness and
in temperament, to laugh out loud.**

**All the things you still are - a soul
of amazing riches, thoughtful and gentle
and so sure of yourself.**

**Still entranced with all things small and new.
Still each day we awake to your beauty
as we look into your strange sea-coloured eyes
and bend to smell the strands of your wispy hair.**

High Hill

On that high hill

the wood burned like a flower,

the smoke rose to my lipline

under a decaying tree.

I walked down that hill to kiss a grave
and marry my heart to the iris of death.

But heat mounts near the waking sun,
and on and on goes the wind, brushing
the powerful weeds.

Walking along the path, my skin has changed,
my shell is under water where it belongs.

There is not much to understand, but to
surrender to honesty and to covet
the courage needed to speak
my ruling rhyme.

On this high hill

I drowned in the devil's chaos,
but that place is long gone.

And though the asylum of darkness still comes around,
it vanishes so quickly with kindness.

Not Afraid

I speak and climb the edges
but my voice falls
like used candy onto
turned-up ground.
I dream and chisel, and
sometimes so utterly sure
of what my days have taught me
and of the flowers they have nurtured,
I lie down and am content.
But the world withers at my doorstep
and my fire is just for show. Just another soul
in the great cavity of home and anonymity.
Like a love that cannot live unless
it is given, my words crack as they pile up
in filing cabinets in rooms where time runs on and out.
I feed between heartache and wait on the predictable
fashion of clever tricks, waiting
for an alibi.

Through the girdle

of mute despair where love
is murdered by a flying breath,
and old age is a house that never opens,
the key was around your neck
and suddenly, you were gone.

Paint bubbles over into
the killing flame. You were stern, yet
so in love with smooth dimensions.

It was our time as I took your arm while we
walked in the icy winter of the forest floor,
watching animals from your cabin window
and feeding the frightened cats.

My pain is newborn but like a boomerang, it is
released over the roaring lake where gulls
descend into the wet pillow of their grave.

How many times I thought you loved me, but
I never knew for certain. I sent you a card
declaring you as my mentor, and how strange
this tree bloomed. Goodbye sweet friend, bride
of nature, spiritual as a weathered stone.

Your visions will always grace my walls,
and tomorrow and tomorrow your memory
will help me to harvest the light
as I grow old.

Morning Glory

Lost hideaway under the flesh
where birds of prey drink to the heart's
southward direction.
In liquid sleep a pocket is forming
of voices named in childhood years.
And from the beginning the miracle
sat on our shoulder like a butterfly,
though we never christened it as our own.
I am tossing back the weight of worldly waters
and things to be morally wounded for.
I give no more from the side of my mouth,
for the seductive shadow and the running crowd.
Plain as the path to heaven, I kiss the dread
and let it drift down sea. I open a room
where the light catches my breath.
I am breathing a morning glory.

This Love

**Linked to this love
that lives on the cliff's ridge
and below the waves of water and sand.
Linked like the spinal cord is
to the brain or the squirrel to the tree.
This love is hunger with heat,
it is words that stop the gallows blade,
it is the thing that brings two souls together
and walks them home.
This love is naked, shelter, empty air
that has a purpose.
This love pardons, shares my bath and bed.
This love I circle like a sacred fire, but still I cannot see.
This love is a lanced abscess, a camera hidden in a wall.
This love cannot betray and buries all abuse in tenderness.
This love cures the dying swan's cries,
has mercy on the insect and also on people
too broken or hardened to care about
this love.**

Door With No Dreams

The braid is made
of thorns and weeds.
The last brutal kiss is locked
tight in my throat. Breathing is
hard, as is smiling at the one
who rules with guilt.
I count four windows with
no opening. I place my
hands on the back of a cloud,
and know the cloud is all that I see.

In League With . . .

**Drive away the battle-weary heart
as the guilt rises like smoke from a cigarette
into a spring afternoon.
It has ended as bones do with time
in earth, cold, as the last maggot clings.
And pride has expanded your belt
as though it were a fetus, growing, demanding
the best of your nourishment.
Carry this on the knee of your cracked imagination
and dispense with your volumes of hurt
done to you by so many hands.
For your tune is repeating, and still your country grows.
Candles and candles to keep alit so your enterprise
of bitterness is warm with stirring.
My eye has overlooked,
and sometimes I ruin my joy
by taking a step on your tiles
so tormented and full of useless fury.
Golden is the calling we were given
but life-determining is the way we sway or twist
to answer it.
And night is not the end.**

Down The Limb

Down the limb
the every-dream climbs
until the ground makes it whole.
After that, it must die,
return like an infant into the heart -
a braver dream about to form.
Once I held bitterness near, like a symbol
of my intelligence. Once love had failed me
and that became my god to beat on and plead with
in overnight torture and unceasing tears. That,
like hell, broke free my way to heaven.
And in a vision I was touched by the hand
of absolute tenderness. I was changed by mercy.
And still the mercy flows so freely through these walls.
Love allowed for me to feel and know,
stronger than the world. Love allowed
for me that neither death nor chance
can defeat.

Found

While in a century surrendered to
a howling vision that bridged
the Earth to God,
while in the chaos of the self-assured
and beautiful, with obstacles of half-felt focus
and rough charm
dropping like heavy hail along my path,
I found you. I found a mind
that could not join the perpetual
and charred motions of loveless togetherness.
I found someone who held to truth like a child,
thick with depth and a rare sort of intensity.
Someone who hasn't the wherewithal to deceive,
who is freed by his belief in lasting, evergrowing love,
who faced the terror and turned
to serve the implausible, only possible mercy.

I no longer cry from loneliness. The light is in
his body and all around is the labyrinth of his mystery.
My eleven-yearlover who still haunts me
with his impassioned creative touch, who loves me like I am,
mostly bare and broken, though sometimes
high with gratitude, glittering,
at peace.

Shift

Everywhere I'm looking I meet
the eye of the wall and still I know
I have five fingers to count
and the chance of discovering any colour
other than the ones I'm seeing.
For me, it is tears without compensation
that make me break and smoke the city.
For me, on the subway, in time
hurting and heaving and pulling apart my nest
is the end before the start, before the barrier breaks
and all that remains is the choice of glory
or ultimate slumber.

Girl

Under the willow tree a girl
was standing, lonely with
the worst of nights ahead.

They said

drink from the tarpit waters and swallow
the oysters that lost their shells.

She saw the drug the wind made
though she did not let it shift her steadfast heart.

Everywhere the notion stood
that fighting back is better than
the tender wave, better than
empathy and believing in affection.

The willow leaves have gone brown and the girl has moved
beside a cliff. She dances as though she
could not fall. And though they gasp to pity
her poor body against rocks and ridges,
she continues to move like a beautiful sound,
sure of the hand that guides her.

Call Me By Name

Speak to me in the
pestilence of my afternoon,
in the dungeon of my self-pity.
Speak to me though love has stopped
its singing and the arrows of wintry worries
sting my weary drum.
Speak to me to anchor me
in obedience.
Together, we could grow and clip
these leprous chains. We could put
out the emptiness that reddens our roof.
We could fill ourselves with perfect sky.
Speak to me and make me shudder
with faith. Let all that is hard to bear
burden me no more.
Speak to me and kiss my plague of troubles.
Bleed your infinity into me and I will be
your secret love.

Did I Dream?

**Did I dream the broken flesh
upon my wrist or only tell
the story I gathered from
my stay in Hell?
What meaning is contained
in the pavement stones or from
a solitary searchlight?
Do I answer what I see
or only that which bends my blood
to mourn?
Somehow I felt the shadows burn
and watched a butterfly rise up like a leaf
from the earth - yellow.
Sometime I was changed,
and saw the patience of God
and the over-rated bliss of power.
Do I remember the day I lost my curtains?
Yes. And I remember
that first evening star.**

Letting Go

I throw up my hands
and feel the diving snow reaching me
from its place beyond the sky.
I make phone calls beside the bones
of a crumbled friendship
and say this is me and a good season
to open doors beneath my scared skin.
It is time to forgive the hardness of others
and my own turned-up defense,
time to re-walk the corridors and let
my disappointments be covered
and stored.

In Perspective

Watching with chaos
rampant in my head, the unbroken
bread leaves me dreamless.
But that will be for now and though
grace is dim, it is near like the ghost
of a dead loved one. The wind warns me
to keep breathing. These bleak months will
work themselves into a monumental miracle,
and every gesture I do today will paint my
room new for tomorrow. In all the places
that count, joy will be fed. It says
humble your sail and drift with the hungry tide.
It says, hold this sand and plan your next
sculpture. Soon these cruel days
will be a grain lost
beneath some ageless waters.

Down The Rusted Needle

Down the rusted needle
into a work of art -
fast-paced, missed out on
the joy of nothing to do.
The eyes as sharp as the nerves,
permanently over-wrought,
performing surgery on every detail.
A million white feathers
tipped the scale, and babies only panic
for lack of love as does
the most hardened of us all.
Needing some absolutes like
"destiny" and God's voice sure
inside my head. Needing to feel
that this ghetto of closed dreams
is just me reeling in my cowardice -
an unacclaimed somebody.
But to wait on the telephone or TV or some
future killed-anguish in this place where nothing blows
nor ceases to burn is like a decade with no holiday or
a cracked egg on the lawn.
But to try and try not to envy the for-sure catastrophe,
the happy Amen or someone young
who has overstepped the madness.

By This Love

By this love
we have learned to pluck
the honest word and place
it freely.

By this love
we have lived a good thing
unlike the things of dark regress.
We have robed the stick figures
of half-made breath in gold
and the scent of animals.

We have touched the minnow fish and the
primordial whale. The clouds speak to us
when lack of money hurts the gorgeous morning
and we are nightmarishly beckoned barefoot across
white ice. Then you tell me things of wild eternity
to keep my regrets from overtaking.

And how I love you
even when I am slipping headfirst
down the brownish stream.

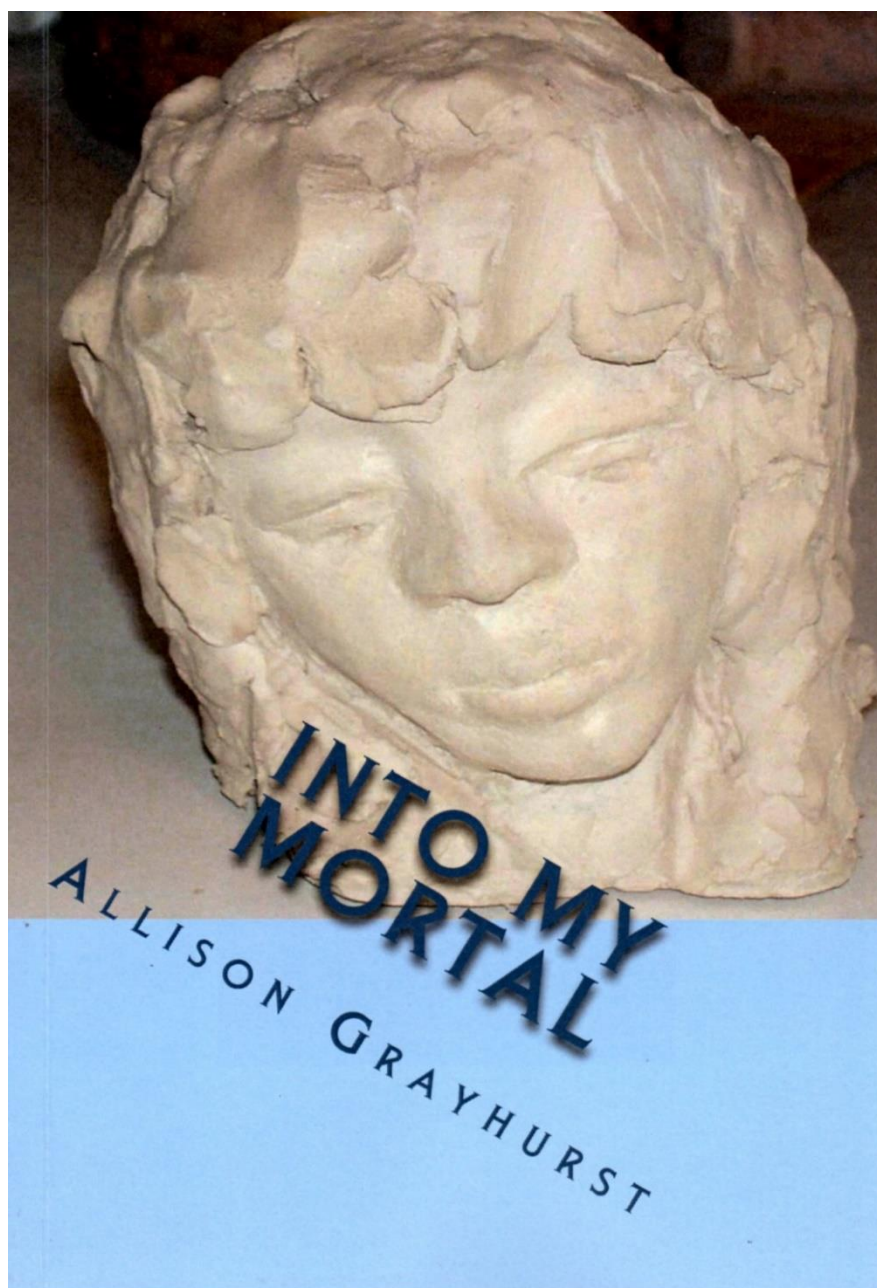
Hit The Mark

This sunrise, rushing
from your pores, smooth and
bright as perfection
has trailed out from a loving home,
out from the endurance of a decade tattooed
to your skin.
You, under the spotlight
bearing no fractures
are as close as the bone is to the shell.
And everyone was transported, gliding
through your soliloquy like birds in
a cool spring air.
A coming together, a rejoicing of all
your struggles, the last completing thread,
magic and kindled by your spiritual voice.
Animated like silver dust on still water, you arrived.
You made the world, at last
understand and listen.

Salvation

In summer,
sweat drips into the mouth like sunshine
and the dry clay cliffs
crumble, fracturing the fox's foot.
The lake's moaning waves repeat with swollen voices.
Children hang shapes on windows, understanding
the transcendence of imagination.
Long ago there was a shadow that turned into form.
Under some bones a prodigy was born - growing
grass in a stone, making bread from a smile.
She watched the circles and placed her body there,
inside the motion, though her mind traveled
without geometry. Just believe it, she said,
and all the world became a lovely dream.

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: Out of Our; Bursting Plethora of Rainbow Colors; Record Magazine; Daily Love; The Artistic Muse; The Muse- An International Journal of Poetry; Full of Crow; Nostrovial! Milk and Honey Siren poetry anthology; Veil: Journal of Darker Musings; Leaves of Ink; Literature Today; Turk's Head Review; The Stare's Nest; Medusa's Kitchen; Ygdrasil – A Journal of the Poetic Arts; Lunar Lit Poetry Page; Yellow Chair Review; Eos – The Creative Context; SpinRock Reader Lit Forum; Novelmasters; The Writer's Newsletter; Rusted Rose Poetry Forum; Eye on Life Magazine; Spillwords Press; Inscribed Museum Literary Zine; The Corner Club Press Quarterly; The Creativity Webzine; Mystic Nebula; Think Pink; Imaginary Conversations Lit Page; Chicago Record Magazine; The Beautiful Space; Sonder Magazine; Nebo: A Literary Journal; Stay Weird and Keep Writing Publishing; Black Mirror Magazine; Dark Blooms Literary Zine; Studio Journal; TwitchFit Lit Writing Zine; Creek Side Writing Forum; Tangerine Heart Poetry Zine; The Poet Community; Lucidity Poetry Journal; Peedeel's Blog; Jellyfish Whispers; The Open Mouse; Pirene's Fountain; Profiles in Poetry Literary Zine; Our Poetry Archive, Vine Figure Poetry Page; Contemporary Women's Poetry Anthology; Thirteen Myna Birds; Duane's Poetree; Eskimoepie; LiteraryYard; The Blind Vigil Revue; Walking Is Still Honest; Stone Face Literary Zine; 1947, a literary journal; Poet's Corner; Indie Poets Indeed; Occulum; GloMag; Treehouse Arts; Beakful; The Furious Gazelle; The Penwood Review; New Mystics; Mount Parable Poetry Forum; Remarkable Doorways Literary Magazine; Poehemians; Scarlet Leaf Review; BigCityLit; The Octopus Review; winamop; VerseWrights; Moongate Motherbird; Outlaw Poetry; The Syzygy Poetry Journal; Peacock Journal Anthology; Five:2:One Magazine



Into My Mortal

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

Into My Mortal

Copyright © 2004 by Allison Grayhurst

First addition

All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art (sculpture):

“Girl” © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-

Into My Mortal

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”

Poems.

ISBN-13: 978-1478228585

ISBN-10: 147822858X

Into My Mortal by Allison Grayhurst

Title ID: 3934892

Table of Contents

New Era	112
Vacant Underground	113
SomeOne New	114
I Do Not Try To Understand	115
Under My Skin	116
Corner of a Dream	117
In The Name	118
New Tree in the Garden	119
Hard Pressed	120
Interlude	121
Only One	122
Six Months Pregnant	123
For Life	124
Kind Escape	125
Pulled from the Lifeless Waters	126
Hard As Cain	127
One Little Heart	128
Looking At Pictures	129
Storm	130
Listening to the Talk	131
Pure and Plastic	132
Born	133
How Lucky I Am	134
In Doubt	135
Hard Time Singing	136
Hood	137
Out From Under	138
No Direction	139
I Know That	140
Until The Ladder Shows	141
New House	142
Tribe	143
Flies	144

Still	145
Every Height I Fall	146
Legacy	147
Serpent in my Shoe	148
On this Dock	149
Thinking Outside	150
I Long To Know	151
Mustard Seed	152
This Vision In Hiding	153
Overpass	154
I see the things	155
I Sleep In The Rain	156
My Dreams Come	157
Always There	158
Blood Letting	159
One Grain	160
This Place, running	161
Under	162
Transition	163
All Things	164
I Was Living	165
Turnstile	166
Longest Day	167
I Dreamt	168
Teacher	169
Tangled by the Slow Fire	170
Slice the pony	171
Jesus in the Counter-Stream	172
On The Line	173
They lie down	174
End	175
A Place For You	176
This Time Over	177
No Hope – For Good	178
Release	179
The Making of Dreams	180

Days Before Birth	181
Learning Temperance	182
Four Sides	183
It Happened	184
Little boy born	185
Dad, I think of you	186
Siblings	187
Turned	188
Into My Mortal	189
The Bane of My Hypocrisy	190
Just Believing	191
What Can?	192
Friend	193
My Little Ones	194
Happy Summer Coming	195
The Vision	196
Junkie	197
The Thing Ahead	198
Desperation/Affirmation	199
The Last Stance	200
I Split	201
Weather	202
The Hand That Came	203
A Better Life	204
I forgot to remember	205
Son - almost one	206
Daughter - almost five	207
Island of Wolves	208
Dark Night	209
It is told again	210
In The Day	211
The Quiet That Comes	212
Arrived	213
Because	214
At Last, Returning	215
The Flood	216

New Era

**From the start I believed
in never bending, but now I am a weather-vane,
guided by singing.**

**Now, in movement I grow like a wild weed -
a glutton of untouched terrain.**

**I have put on the iron mask,
burned my skin for the battles
of another. That shore is sinking
and my globe has altered its axle.**

**I put away my grown-up philosophy
to live by impulse and the pity of God.**

**The task is done, the ice is swallowed.
It is time to love the gargoyles and create
a new form of beauty.**

Vacant Underground

No sales clerk
or hand to count coins.
A wish is like a wave that breathes,
hunting with the tide.
The sand is grasped but never held -
its form lost again in the unforgiving sea.
I had a wish, jealous and absolute.
It took my days like a nunnery and
discarded all urban vice.
It was my only footwear, my mornings
of praise and exalted sighs.
It caused my bones to snap like a dry crust of bread
and left my innards excavated, desperate for anything else.
This wish has never died, though for a decade it has been
beaten down. It walks beside me, deformed and chained.
I own it and it owns me, as we walk, born as one.

SomeOne New

Change is crouching
on my back deck,
behind the pillars
and rotted wood.

Change is tossing in my womb
and giving me a bell to ring.

Like someone new to sing to,
it nicks my forehead with its
broken rhythm. Like starlight
weaving under my skin, growing,
wanting my speed,
change is alive, but small as a rice grain
forming its heavenly head.

Welcome little hamlet of wonder,
welcome from the blue breath of God.

Come see us all and turn this home
of three kindred souls into four.

I Do Not Try To Understand

**Wear the wind, my flesh is round
but so easy to cut.
By the glow of a fallen tribe
someone touched my name
and sent me drifting.
From the child I learn of laughter
in the morning. Because
there is a secret growing within
though the weight has not yet started,
I count myself internal and need even less
from the world.
Praise the dark and the insect's back.
Make room for the newborn to rise.
Look, the doves are drenched in rain.**

Under My Skin

In this month
slumbering onward,
I feel your kick
saying that 'yes' a change is
coming - one so strong it will
open many doors along side it.
I press my hand against my
belly and wish for you a healthy world
of open spaces and unwavering affection.
I have no fear of the boy you will be.
I have darkness in me I cannot shake,
but that has no hold -
for it has always been love
that has carried me along.

Corner of a Dream

The fixed rule
in the corner of a dream
is lost in the soils and slabs
of those drowned by duty
and the pure cheer of society's whim.
I comb my hair. I journey through
a keyhole to make my claim.
A tower, a reed, like a broken curb -
God is easily tripped over.
Once I was lonely. Now this sinking feeling
is full of folly, though it still vaults
me in its swampy temper.
I talk to the dark. It has my story . . .

Only to swim and shower the garden
with the juice of my burning veins.

In The Name

**With the northern tide he came
like a bride to her first wedded kiss.
Born without enemies or pride,
he drank the flame of God. Soon
he was a legend and all the world
would praise his name like an unfriendly
habit. Some knew his word like
bread, like a babe that needed constant
tending. Some would hear and then in years, turn
back to join the assembly of conflicting voices,
pulling behind them the weighted shadows of so many
engulfing concerns.**

**I am one who heard and lost, who felt my blood
renewed and then ingested the virus of adulthood
and all its houses made of paper.**

**I lived with a rotted passion, with a sterile faith
and a heart so tight and annoyed.
This is a remembrance of the thirst
he cured.**

**I am saved again by the shrilling cut of his love
and by the tender stream of his great pity.**

New Tree in the Garden

I know she sees
her meadow broken by
thundering changes sinking
through the floor.
I know her home feels cut
by a tide unlocking an invasive unknown.
But still the horn must blow
and our love can be her temple and overcoat.
We would never cross her off to cheer
a new seed or count her a little underscore
while welcoming the infant sound.
With love not lead by guilt
and a grace that releases all habitual chains,
we will burn with family-joy
humming strong and stronger
when the walls fall down, making space
to hold one more.

Hard Pressed

The wave drifts in like a snake
through this open season. Dreamlines
are lost in the dirty laundry and I am
learning to reshape and bend.

One brick, two bricks, three, placed
on the outer wall. There is no protection - only faith
and the long ride home.

Interlude

Upon the window's sill
I saw a ghost walking
of a young woman veiled in grief
with sunset hair and morose eyes -
her death drifted to me like
a scent. I called to her, with
overflowing sympathy, but the grave
was now her bed and the enemy-world
was her heart's betrayal. I saw her sit
then look to the sky, her tormented forehead
glistening as the rain did on the roof's old shingles.
She spoke three names softly, and over and over their
sound ripped my skull as if the sun itself had entered
to burn all hard-held secrets out.
I loved her like someone I had long known and understood,
watching her, hardly visible
as the rain pushed on.

Only One

What speaks of tenderness in the dead-blue
aftermath of human-induced horror?

When husband and wife are at odds,
seeing only the diseased boil of slaughter
then non-existence, when the pregnant woman
finds no seat in the midst of a
crowded day?

What speaks of holding on when the world is pale
with grief and parents mock their children's love
with coldness and condescension?

What eye can see divine magnificence before
its doom? Or find greatness in what
society has ignored or condemned?

On the rafters a single flower is born.

I look to that single flower, like I look to spending
the afternoon with the ones who have endeared,
like the pulse and turn of my infant within
or a brief morning solitude -
open for interpretation.

Six Months Pregnant

Thud, thud
my body burns
to stretch and hold your
growing form.
Kick and twist, you within
having no shadow, only
the liquid darkness that is your
right, your atmosphere of rich
undeniable movement and depth.
Soon you will breathe a new force
into this family, and we three will
sing at your bedside -
little boy, welcome, grower
of dreams.

For Life

**Though I am laden with the weight
of preparation and the physical pull
of this marveling change, I feel
your kindness like cool weather
cradle me within this cloud.**

**I am grateful for you and your
untiring compassion - the way we breathe
as one and plant our tears in the same dark
alley. Though it is hard for me to
harvest my love, the wood burns bright
beneath my exhausted frame.**

**I look at you and know I am not lost
from the blue skies of glory.**

**I know your love is tremendous - you are the one
who keeps me standing, drills for me a passage
out of this thorny undertow and shows me
the beauty of today, here
in my hands.**

Kind Escape

Once, a child, under
the spring's thriving sun,
lead by the glory of intricate imagination,
shadowed only by other children's push and talk.
The way was clear, the valley below was soaked
with debris. I never touched
the briars of age as the birds carved
out my language. It was long ago
but I have not left those unreal adventures,
only now with adult-mind and adult-longing
they still ease my dread. When the cathedral
is closed and the enemy has entered my blood,
I slide into their colourful weather
and wait for the day to be renewed.

Pulled from the Lifeless Waters

**I see the eyes that blow the day
from the dark throat.
I feel the voice of unhindered love
wash over my skin like fresh butter.
I hear the world calling with its drug dull
blurbs and I fade like colour in the sun,
exposed at my roots to the drain of muted sorrow.
Then I wake to the good journey
and the ruthless tearing away of burdening stuff
to touch a purity that pains like
a small girl's smile or the death of someone near.
It is new again, has left me to stand on my own again
and take the challenge to my pores,
with forgiveness everlasting and the terror
of knowing so great, so generous a love.**

Hard As Cain

Against the down and heron white
the earth lifts up its collection plate.
Rivers and forests are overflowing with
amputees - a million voices nibbling away the sky.
Sour death against the dried thistles
and clouds are heavy with death's pungent odour.
You draw the iron, you draw the fist
until at last you too will weep for the birds upon
the hill.

Everything's making too brutal a sense
as the yellow lawns are sprinkled.
You cannot give in to the ruling sun nor to the misfits
and courageous. Orphaned cubs and kids blank
with disease, ruined by the sanctity of your pocket.

Heaven is in a song. You strike a match
and burn all instruments with a shrug and a wave
of your formidable hand.

One Little Heart

One little heart
graced with purity.
Yellow hair and happy eyes
and all the dreams of a child's mind
like the shape of a butterfly in the drain,
or elephants in mushroom soup.

One little girl
dancing to sunshine
making eccentric faces
and laughing outloud.

One little child
painting pictures with her hands,
crying hard for babyhood
and spilling her fears on the ground.

One little heart
unknowing of all the gifts she gives,
of how much love she allows to live
and change this place called home.

Looking At Pictures

No darkness falls on the wasted hour,
only the drip drip drip of the faucet
and images of more enriching days.
The sky tells all
and I fear the thinning of my bones
and toenails too hard to cut.
I fear this weakness in my lungs
like a subtle beast devouring the best
of all I can give.
I see the yellow-haired children
playing in the sand and know my
fortune is sealed with love.
But still the walls are wet
with spilled coffee
as I think of the dead, and everyday I feel
a feverish sorrow overtaking
their watching eyes.

Storm

Quickly shadows come
on the window sill and over the
lilac tree.
Soon it is the song of the wind chimes
as birds fly low.
Crows talk and walk across the
vacant road. Flowers
get ready to lose their colour as petals
depart as butterflies would from their stems. The head
of a child is peering around some drapes while grownups
bring candles from the basement.
City cats curl under cars and bumblebees are still.
There is a sharp curve of the sky and
a streak of shocking white
like a line across a blank chalkboard.
Doors and screens are closed, as pigeons and squirrels
cover their nests, blind to all but the pressing
now.

Listening to the Talk

By the window, opening eyes
to the rival of dreams and
midnight in the nerves
like shell-shocked mothers
nursing infants.

So much was lovely before
knowing the meaning of money
and the blazing rain clouds of responsibility.
We ate our food and let our coffee last.
To bed with no mercy or fun in the eyes
but slashing the ball held as a child and
talking of baking, homesteads and depression.

There are dogs left in yards at 30 below
and children hearing grownups complaining
about their spouses and the burden of having children.
These are the ways shadows are born,
clinging like squid to the heel of life.

Pure and Plastic

The radius of a lifetime,
locking and unlocking the patterned weave
is but felt rubbed against
a jagged rock, torn at the slightest speed.
The flesh, the shell, the fruit's hard peel
some never go beyond. But the pathway
to the sea is long and duty is like
a safety-net dream that breaks the days down.
Magic is formed in the hands of a child
where shame is unknown as crime.
A simple way to nerve the eyes
and charge the stars with song.
What is missing? The water? The mansion? The sand?
Hand in hand we jump in time
and find our sanity
combing the shores of volatile
love.

Born

Once fireflies
devoured my hair
and my rosebush awoke
to the parable of the diseased snail.
Then one afternoon, when sleep
was my steady horse, my curtains
were lifted by the waters of God, and I sang
in the light - my name altered forevermore.
I remember weeping the evil from my pores, then gaining
the peace no guilt could void.
I remember how I tore off the leather jacket that I wore
to protect me from true expression.
There was a church across the road I would watch
as its bricks grew gravely and old. I would
pray for baby birds and animals, learning
to be free with this new found love.
The seasons climbed, and from a beautiful joining,
a child was born.
From that child, an era of music and warm windows.
Once the hunger ceased and the inviting horror
dried up like a fallen leaf -
life became for me and my love like a paper airplane held
in the hands of that wondrous child.

How Lucky I Am

So now she is three
and like a lake that has always been there,
soothing me, feeding me with wonder,
she grows, continuing.
In ten years it will be a different
language we share, but always
the same connecting laughter and the feeling
of being buried in velvety flour
by her gentle ways that move my ravaged heart
into peace.
In twenty, we will drink coffee, sharing
the same window. She will teach me, and I will be
her secret underground where she can nestle from
the revolving world.
In thirty, I will be old and she will be settled
into the source of her strength and individuality.
We will love each other the same as today,
when love is like the very air that rocks
so sweetly between us.

In Doubt

Under the guise
of do or die
the heart's mystery is born.
And then accepted
as an afterthought
when pain and struggle are foregone.
Because faith came like it did
from the tape recorder and other
underrated things, I could never speak
in whole of the dreams that drove me to love
nor appease the breath of death on
my clothes.
I could never will the tomato to ripen
or quench my thirst with social talk.
The nail is in the wood and still I wonder
why I am, on my own
on the world's platform
- a gift
 to no one.

Hard Time Singing

The ground that grows
the wasteful blight and
estranges the kiss and hiss of wildlife
is in me like a slaughtered tribe
that has no face.

I am in the nightmare cloud, wrapped
in tar and rotted wood. I hide
beneath the blanket, undone.

Sickness has walked around me, mile
around mile, and names me this stone chiseled
in two. It is the beginning, but it is midnight
and I am marked to be unmoved.

Hood

Circle the dollar,
a plant is shining
in streams from the sun.
I came from the darkness,
fierce, yet frail like one
wounded by the touch of
something too beautiful.
In my hands a star was destroyed
like a minnow out of water
gasping in the harsh air.
Songs and stories are what I have.
The answers I once played with are perishing
and only the vision remains.
I think this is good, though it feels as though I failed
my sounding fire and wetlogged my faith.
What was shadow is now solid, and the solid has
thinned to a smoky stream.

Out From Under

Simple beginnings,
a tear finally released -
a gleam, gentle as a dying flame.
Breaking slowly the crust of
dull months, the muddied fury
of being carried by the tide
and never holding the promised chalice.
A shape, a shade never seen
rising like the shadow of a walking giant
over my rooftop, down the eavestroughs
into my empty bowl.
Moonlight is slow. A body stretches
and pulses with new song.
Rosebuds are stirring from winter's slumber.
By and by the days
are moving forward -
a drop falling through.

No Direction

I smelled the afterglow
of these tricky toys
that bent the branches low
and drove the dreams from my eyes.
I saw you sitting, curled up in pain
and singing low of things that had no name.
I know the answer's blank as a January sky
and the lights that flicker
from door to door are not for me to understand.
I felt a paleness in my hands -
my fingers were worms, struggling out from
the hardened earth. Being alone is like a window
looking out. And guilt is good as the first step
then stops you from taking anymore. I am a rider on
a rocking horse. I caressed the edge too many times.
The curtain is open but nothing new walks by: Love,
love, it has to keep on . . .

I Know That

I know that faith
ebbs and flows, sometimes
larger, then hardly there
at all.

I know my faith
is often all I own,
though barely visible,
crushed under
the world's forearm.

I know to sing and that singing
can be freedom no matter
the crack and heel.

I know to love
for love is what remains
when nothing else renews.

I know to pray like breathing.

I know there is forgiveness
for what I fail to do,
and mercy is there for me to receive
like water.

Until The Ladder Shows

You answer me,
not with an antidote
but by putting a pillow under
the dragging day.
You answer me,
not speaking of summer
but of sustaining.
Any onlooker could see
my shrinking scenery
but never know
the way you showed me a pebble-stone path
over the high hills and muddy terrain.
You answer me with minimal deliverance,
delicately stepping through this grief-inducing wilderness,
tree-like, moon-like, zen-like
you slide under my veil to add a little colour.
You answer with candle light, not gold,
but answering. And I accept with grateful sighs
this balcony to stand on
while fire consumes each corner of my fallen rooms.

New House

**Ready now to open the vault
and chase my vanity out with the tide.
Ready to enter the submerged stages
of colossal change and streams
of primal glory wrapped
like thread around the pulse of God.
Ready to believe in mercy and in
warmth in the dead winter night.
Under my toes the sensation grows
that something is coming to change the
structure of my roof and allow more room
to rest.
Ready to hold the encroaching massacre aloof,
to paint my name on the wall and pile
all my expectations
at the foot of this entrance door.**

Tribe

Upon these days I spot
some children, hair like
silken straw under a daisy sun.
Three so in love with the wild bush
and humorous song and with each other -
with strong affection they spend their
mornings in exalted play.
Arm around arm, the oldest only five,
they know friendship that separates the lucky
from the hoards of thirsty travelers, they know
the embrace of childhood connection unmarred
by fractured homes.
Two joined by blood, one by fate, each
by the unseen link of tender recognition.
I watch their actions of natural glory
and feel their laughter like swallows circling
above their small heads.

Flies

By dawn the flies
released their shape into
the soothing wind and what
came back was the weary pulse
of dying wings grafted to the day.
What world was this inside their
dark heads that honoured the
photograph over the experience,
that held up frivolous wealth like
a deserved trophy?

What faith was plucked with the flowers
as all their little tongues reached out to pocket
the short-term scent?

The flies live in their high castles like undergrounds
enjoying only the drive and privileged complaints.
They call themselves the philanthropists and
the even-tempered elite.

But I see them in the honey jar
and count them as already gone.

Still

You and I are a terracotta river
encasing the unmanageable rock.
We drink from the cyclone fire
and fill our ears with the sounds of harps
and nocturnal rejoicing.
When I am touched and my head
is under the feather then time is
fossilized and my body is the voice
that drives me down the curve,
wide enough for an astounding fulfillment.
When I touch the core of your bones
and join the urgency of your kisses
with my own, then we are lured
from our daily plots and cast-out dreams,
until flooded and found by the golden synergy
of our married tongue.

Every Height I Fall

Must I be dark as the
vacant church at
night where many have
pleaded and died - bodies
in heavy caskets, silenced forevermore?
Must I be there, against the storm-cloud,
frightening the pretty blue-jay and the boy
in his rocking chair?
Must it always be the crushed beetle, the Earth
sick from human greed and the spinal joint maimed
from not enough love?
Up and down the pillar of eroded dreams
the years are thread strings lit afire by bickering
and cracked homes.
Must the TV be always turned on
and the soft features of grace
be trampled on in every
perfect garden?

Legacy

If you see the trail
of eels slide down
the whispering waves
and touch the history
of great dreams and
rampant madness,
then it happens when
you're young, when love
is a sealed coat, when hope
feels like a babe alone on a rooftop
and possibilities are dry and grey and faraway.
If you are traveling
the prison cell pages and snacking on the crumbs
from the epileptic's bed,
it happens before twilight,
before "home" is a word to count on.
And when you meet the antlers at eye level
and consume the rich, medicinal cherry,
it never stands on the other side
but remains like a new organ
there for always redefining
the workings of your head.

Serpent in my Shoe

There it is -
inane, insane instinct
in the bedrooms of
the unknowingly damned.
I rise like a rose
into bloom then lose all
my petals to the storm.
Waves and lions under the
sink, and the deepest dream I ever
dreamt was alone with the motions
of darker worlds.
I live with my drink and the smell
of too many ghosts warming themselves
over my vent.
I run with the wheelbarrow, my possessions
piled like dead sparrows.
Talking through the window, I hear
them talking about the petty thing that keeps
days turning and leaves no one free enough
to walk the plank.
I stand outside for a moment
and plunge all I know like a stake
into dry ground.

On this Dock

I hear the white steed
and the fish together
in dark obscurity.

I look at the body of water,
the children weeping to gain control.

I listen for the perishing wind
and declare to it a vigil
of telltale strength.

The journey here faces
the drive of instinct - to buckle
in and walk the safest hallway
or to carry the weight of failure
and still harbour a cry to the fox and a belief
in the many shapes of heaven.

The journey knows its evening
has come and all the beautiful clouds will drop
one by one from the sky.

Thinking Outside

Touching tails
and feather wings.
The apple trees bend
and sing of autumn's coming.
Starlings talk across backyards
and the high-pitched beetle
fills the wind like a calming drug.
In this place as summer fades
the quiet demands self-truth.
To pull from inside
a lacerated pride
and pile it on the dried grass.
Shadows mend the divided self
and love is an activity
to understand while counting birds
overhead.

I Long To Know

**I long to know the things
I never dreamt
beneath the shingles
and the watered-down dawn.
I long to know the name
of every insect that brushes
my cheek and the passions
of days long gone.
I sit beside the narrow rocks
and count each weathered stone.
I hope for love inside a stranger
and long to feel with fingers and soul
the connecting thread
that binds me to my enemy's door.**

Mustard Seed

I know your name,
but not your face,
octagon of tiny wonder
changing as I move through
my days, cloaked in the drain
and joy of your mystery.
I think I can feel you sometimes
sitting beside me, playing games
with your sister and laughing with
all the rest.
I think of someone fiercely beautiful
merging souls so easily with the family-us.
I touch my belly, remaining clothed
in this still-normal body.
I turn the lights out early, happy
when I think of the future.

This Vision In Hiding

**Unsteady, forever reviving
the withered skin on my back
and in the straddled stride of
this and every night, getting through.
Dead now, my old teacher, never famous,
never big on sentimentalized mercy,
but like the cloud and the maple trees
and even the animals that stared into your windows
you were like the cold air all around,
necessary and impersonal.
I said goodbye long ago. I do not visit your
headstone, but your being is beside me
and we remain important friends. I keep you here,
and one day, when my infants have grown, I will return
to your country and hear your voice humming
once more in my ears.**

Overpass

In the gravel hole
slumbering in cold fatigue
open, and open is tomorrow
never arriving. But pale and pasty
sickness in my mirror is all I see
when I look at my changing body, changing
again to form a great wonder.
Weak as a broken limb, my mind
is empty of inspiration and I am drifting with this seed
from day to day waiting for the sting to pass
and leave only a larger belly and joy
of what (in time)
will be.

I see the things

**we will never share,
like my children on your knee
or the bright fountain of this new life.
I see the changing years and sometimes
even forget to talk to you in my head
or shed the bitter tear.
But I still feel
a living warmth in the shades of your picture,
and I can hear your voice in the furnace call.
I can remember.**

I Sleep In The Rain

Lead by guilt - the fire seed
that begins with planting a new house.
Figures flay over the cold windows,
charming the fury of adjustment and opening wide
the shape of good wishes and engulfing beginnings.
The birth that contains death like the death
that brings rebirth - these are things rarely told
and when told, always told as though
taken for granted. The sermon, the singing
of all that comes hard to wake us
hard and beautiful.
Human in the void, in the faith that trees know
and a snail that moves across a busy road.
Love sometimes lacks its light, but is a stronger
love when shadowed because it excavates
below smiles and kind affection. Love that is
sharp - turning the outsides in
is in the air, sleeping but visible.

My Dreams Come

**I move and lose my frame
of ultimate freedom. Into
immobile dreams, and growing
fast are the fantastic blossoms of my mind.
As the hard core challenge
gets tucked in my socks
like a saved coin for tougher days,
I get weak with the demands on my shelf,
lazy in my intent though still I am
loved. Loved, but lost again and not at the
potential I am asked to uphold.**

**The sound rises in my ear. I put more
pillows under my head. I see the TV light
blind the brighter one beneath my bed.**

**I won't touch the crown or the things of great seed
until my excuses and ways to crawl under
are called to task and asked by me
to permanently, irrevocably
leave.**

Always There

The door's ajar
and my body can go there,
through the small space of light.
To make a landing for me
in the tumultuous rantings
of existence - held out
a moment, reminding me of how
to be alive with you there,
feeding my weakened gut, breathing
my breath, speaking of a love greater than
any love, and in doing so, forgiving me my
distractions and daily rituals of despair,
forgiving me for forgetting the magnitude
of your cloak that warms both in and out.
The gift again at my doorstep. The times
I do not look for you, then you find me.

I am not afraid. I am just a citizen - yours, even when
undirected, cynical and spent.

Blood Letting

How will I find myself again
when I am halfway from the ground,
among these walls of pictures
and uncertain echoes, with frames
on all sides of what I am suppose to be,
but never detailing the fury of my yesterdays?
Maybe there is no voice, only once
the sea, and then a wet blot of sand shaped by
the memory of pull and tug.
Maybe I steered myself under the rails,
and the field that was to be my toil is parched,
acres of hair-lipped unmanageable dreams.
How am I to find myself this way,
giving no fruit to my appetite, lucid
but slumbering through another decade,
so full of rudimentary contradictions?

One Grain

Bring me home
like the armadillo to its feast,
like the painter to her beholder
and the captain to his sea.
Love me long in this fearful underground
where the world I see is inside out
and the laws of the land have no place
for individualism or mercy.
Touch me on the shoulder,
let me know it is your answer,
and the sun will not be denied
nor will the seed die from bad weather.
Open my sight beyond this kaleidoscope
of contradiction, into the frame work of
one-light, one-way, one beautiful beginning.
Bless me, feed me, know me.
I will be what I can be,
higher than my mind can carry,
higher still with you by my side.

This Place, running

**Altered by the taking flood,
taking my wound to its midnight pressure,
excavating the dormant lie I've traced across
the pattern of my life.**

**This sinking red secret
that pins me to the world will go
if I trust there to be a doorway where a wall is standing.
If I release the vault of hopes mangled
then forsaken and bind myself to heaven,
then this poison will drain from my veins, the
insurmountable rock will be my waterslide
and the crack on my shore will bring forth a
different land of glorious senses.**

**I dig. The lid has shifted. The dry pond is moistening,
soon to be a place of movement.**

**The world is what it is, never to know
the waking heart of mercy.**

**But we are not thieves, nor are we to be the
minstrels of poverty, torn apart in the oceans,
clouded by the shows of unGodly charity
and well rehearsed praise.**

**We are to be the house, sacred to enter -
the winternight's window left ajar.**

Under

The wave that corroded my
belly came and went for days without
reprise, and then nothing
until summer. I felt the sharp daunting ache of dreams
unrealized and my forehead thick with
a strange desperation, one that comes like
a thin foam over the eyes to dull
the colours of everything clean and beautiful.
I felt the ache in my spine as though a roach
had attached itself there, slowly maneuvering its way
to my brain cells. The green shutters were closed.
The past fell at my feet like a bag of hungry
worms. I held on but knew myself almost
lost in the furrows of this mangled belief.
I peeled the paint and held my breath inside
a dark intensity. I blamed the outside
then found my basket empty.

Transition

Dry and dirty
the heart's weather sings
of a storm.
On shore, you are my faith,
housing the unfalse yet familiar.
These days we are rooted under water
without pigment, unsure, unfocused
and entering a strange plateau.
Clouds come in, but the miracle reigns.
A threshold to bind and change us.
All these things hurling us towards the light
like one love lost and another love new found,
like a heaviness that is hard
though we know it is grace.
This too, we will shoulder together.
This too, we will add to our language
and place on our windowsill.

All Things

A long road I carried
then the light vanished
and I broke free, off the cliff
into this space of holding faith
with nothingness all around.
There is no world of karma and ruthless laws,
no dense shadow tugging under my underclothes,
driving me into anguish and poverty and life-taking chores.
There is only this destiny to claim
that has asked me for its hand since the beginning.

I Was Living

**I was living out of the fold,
floating like a dead fish over the waves.
I was waiting for the phone call
that would change the colour of my house,
change the way I held my pen
and the amount of shade in every room.
I was listening to the slow click of the furnace,
listening for a voice behind the shower curtain,
for a resolving answer before midnight.
I was unhappy about my choices,
about the burnt shutters and the so-little-left
for my art.
I was there. I have yet to recover.
I am fumbling in the emergency room.
I hear it is time. I hear the trees talking
while I sleep.**

Turnstile

Plain as the impersonal sun,
the burden breaks the space
between my neck and shoulders,
halts the cool breeze and places
at my feet a nest of highly intelligent ants.
I am not walking, but standing on one foot
and I have been here for so long. I am not saying
I have not felt the love, the gifts, the undeniable
kindness of others, but my blood has thickened
and runs like lava beneath my summer's dress.
One expression stapled to a frame to the wall.
I look, I see, but still I cannot change its meaning.
If I am caught in a slumber I cannot behold . . .
If I am not free of the fear that clips
me to this intolerable edge . . .
then let the wind rip the skin from my skull and expose
the larvae festering beneath - let me see so the weight
will lighten for good and the pain that's lodged in my throat
will loosen and go the way of dead misfortune.
I only want to know a new way of surviving, of riding
the pattern of my stars.

Longest Day

So bends the tale
of the longest day.
The ghost under my flesh
twists the promise put on paper
that was bound to help my hunger.
The day drips like stale milk onto
a dry tongue. The word came.
The word was drilled as though it were a crooked
bench - torn apart to turn into something
different. Morning ended. It is good to unveil
the enemy, but waking is always a crushed seashell
once picked as a child, and nothing is that simple.
Diving, piercing the fourth layer of water. Landing nowhere
without sustenance or surplus. The thief inside
wishes to loosen itself from the sharp edges of morality.
My hearing tries to stay shut from the sounds.
The day is a giant stumbling through a
playground. Is it this I need?
Another eyelid to open, to open and to close?

I Dreamt

**I dreamt that you guided me
across the barren roads,
up steep stairways
and into the rooms of a kind stranger.
I dreamt I killed the Buddha,
that I fell headfirst into a blue flame fire
and felt no features of hopeless defeat.
I dreamt you were covered by
half a shroud, waking with a picture
of God in your hands.
I dreamt we were thrown together, flailing
our limbs until we entwined before the grave,
before the growing old.
I dreamt we kissed. And praise and guilt
were devoured by our sensual labour.
We found a doorway near that natural ocean.
We were crushed then cured by the heavy tide.
I dreamt you loved me as you do just now -
there was no loneliness, no voice withheld
and no place of shame.**

Teacher

Your days were lived
scaling rooftops then
plunging into the thick, consuming
atmosphere of guilt, humiliation
and child-like extremes of love.
Your years were frantic like
under the current of an undecided wind,
yet focused in their steady intensity,
hopeful in their reliance on God and the visions
that bent you backwards and left no pretense in tact.
Your light was prophetic, almost too
much for the human mind to bear.
You gave to the beggars, never forgetting
the cold weight of ten years in chains.
Your wife was the balm for your difficult
passions, the one who held you when all was spent
and you writhed on the floor, at her feet, foaming at the
mouth like a beaten horse.
Your gift was unmatched by others who grew
beside you in vanity and glory.
Your gift was once my lifeline, remains with me
like something kindred, always
a stepping stone.

Tangled by the Slow Fire

I fell then ran
from murder to counterspin,
leaving praise in the mudslide
and my breathing-in, rich with toxins.
I spiraled into the crematorium
weighed down by other burning corpses.
I could not hold. I cannot crawl out -
this nylon weave, this room of pestilence
and out-dated cough syrup. No nurse is near,
no toll-free joy up ahead.
Can there be another roof to leap from,
another danger to combat and empty my grainbags for?
The cell, the sand, the year without shade -
It all happens without the moon. This floor can't
carry my weight. It all happened without a final hour.
The hand has gone with the hangnail.
Guilt is my terror and the emptiness of the tide.

Slice the pony

in the pocket -
a child's gift that ran the gamut.
And now we are onto more elaborate toys,
finding meaning in the pebbles left on the road
and finding hope inside a risk. Because of so many things
lost and remade, I have been left without a plan
but to lean without shame or resistance on
the bosom of God. That is the role, the flesh
and backbone combined. There is only this place
and this time and then - death, like a miracle
in the fishtank of existence. Death like sunshine
in the lonely eye. Death like the taste of a red pepper.
Because I know it is all for you and all is given
by you - we sing, we paint our stories - this story
rich with surprises and laden with disappointments.
I sing and paint and wish for other things,
though I am satisfied with love and with the way
you see fit to carry me across.

Jesus in the Counter-Stream

The grip was lost,
chocolate was made
and the makers were magic.
For this I bled
then opened my heart
to a difficult wonder.
It has been worth
a pile-up on the road,
no rubber under the foot
and a year of hard breathing.
With this I have come to understand myself
and place my hope outside the framework of
normal time.
In the closet
in the here-and-after
mercy is the lipstick,
the colour of the camera.
What is lost is lost and all that was lost was remade
when he was found.

On The Line

The reins are dropped,
icicles shift from roof to ground
though the colour does not shift
sure as I was, it would.
The broken glass is still in my pocket,
the cramp has not left my thighs
as I push for renewal.
The light is still dull, ants raid the
kitchen and pepper spills too much into each
good meal.
I gave it all for a sense of movement, willing
to lose what I still have not lost.
My understanding is stuck.
What I believed has not come to pass.
I am wearing the same old clothes.
I am dealing with the same message.
The carpet is curled.
I have no place to go.
What I did has not helped.
Such a long-standing ache as this
must be overthrown or become part of
my means of restitution.

They lie down

as

**children would below the blankets
on a cold, unheated night.**

**They fend for themselves, using the vocabulary
of prophets, the tears of the misplaced
and the belief in mercy.**

**They stand tall at an impasse,
draw pictures in the wind
and covet love as the only treasure.**

They give light in a torrent of darkness and pressure.

**They reach new plateaus of surrender
with each failed plan. And all the time
they are singing,**

**of sadness
of wantonness
of the joy of being loved
by God.**

End

I see the darkness fully. I face the sword
to slice clean the cancer blotting my soul.
I dive in the sewer, side by side with bacteria,
holding my face straight up. I let my fingertips be
severed so I can free the rest of my body.
I am frightened, looking beyond
the murky fear into a faith, small but glowing.
I have been the caterpillar. Not for one more day.

To get through it, I am going through it -

smeared like a bird by an oil-spill,
cut off from the sky.

A Place For You

**It's nice to have a place for you
among our tatteredwares.**

**It's good to hold onto what little light
breaks in unawares.**

**One time I was traveling through
nameless streets and unclaimed yards
aching with solitude. But that was when
life was spent on temporary truths.**

The weather is good, whichever way I turn.

**My mind is sure of only love and love only
brings on this weight.**

Doubts move like maggots after the final blow.

**Although doubts feed on a solid faith, they also cause
such a faith to grow.**

**It's nice to be here half asleep watching
the grey outside.**

**One day soon our eyes will meet
and I will recognize your face
like a perfect lullaby.**

This Time Over

**The windows will close no more.
Rolled over, facing the last whisper
of divorce and desperation.
Because of forgiveness and the out-stretched
anchor offered in my days, every day,
I have been set free
like a piece of driftwood dislodged
from the river's bank, in motion.**

No Hope – For Good

Understand, I was pleading
like Job under the wire
for the arrival of hope.
But now I see that hope is murder to the seed
of this emerging beginning.
It is not a butterfly shred in a child's hands
but the cause of dark inertia,
giving despair a little more fuel to run with,
preventing the final collapse, stopping the black hole
that will suck the last trickle of false expectations through,
keeping me pinned to this stalled, starved and stale
universe like a crushed insect clinging for breath.
It is hope but also torture that takes death away
from that which needs to die.
It is hope but not enough to build on,
so it is better that it never comes, never runs
along side this something spectacular that is trying
to break through.

Release

Finally it has come,
engulfing my thighs
and the ends of my toes.
Finally the answer glides
through my hair like the wind,
freeing me again on four sides.
There is no trick, no easy way to ride
unscathed through this bloodthirsty town.
I have discovered the way is to lean into
the invisible breath of divinity like a child does
into its mother's solid arms.
Finally there is a warm shade in my soup -
the nutrient to make my panicked heart mute.
It is the channel I have been waiting for,
the doctor's slip to erase
all future obligations.

The Making of Dreams

Landing lucky
this side of the threshold.
Nobody sees me. I see
what other eyes cannot. But
that is easy. It is not easy
to dilute my passion for the
distractions of duty. To hold
up the mirror and find a look
I've never known before.
Under the carpet the days collect
and erect a year of hardship and somehow,
remarkable glory. I know this is where
I am supposed to be. I know the price
and the food. Lights on. Lights off. Balance
is never the goal.

Days Before Birth

**Thrill and feel the last days approaching
before the great change.
It is sliding down a ladder
into the full of the noon-day sun,
quickenning the blood and bringing night dreams
into the open.**

**Under flesh and sinews
dragons burn,
making way for the new creation. Taboos
are swallowed by mud puddles
pock marking streets, and safety is a far-fetched
dream.**

**Imagine and hold
these last days of gold
that will bring forth a brighter, more enduring metal.**

**Let the heart be at ease,
for life will learn to breathe
a shade undiscovered.**

Learning Temperance

Cradle the handle under the sleeve
and watch as the sun changes shadows.
Blue. I wait in the private everafter with
the future under my fingernails and an orange seed
in my throat.

Will it happen or will it always be 'the wait'?
Waiting in the moment just before bloom
but never arriving into full colour? Or is it only
a long pause, gathering breath for the final
swing that will bury all dullness that has gone before?
I see two doors and neither of them are open.
I see a tree I have walked by many times before. This time
I noticed it and smiled.
Maybe this is not darkness at all,
but a line to follow and focus on
like a child watching rain drops - one at a time.

Four Sides

Four sides to the silence
that ribbons my throne.

Four thieves that pry open
my secrets as night blends
with day.

One that skates my terrain, slicing and cutting
and so very cold.

One whose mouth stretches wide,
consuming my minstrel's tale.

Another who tugs and slows my voice rejoicing.

A fourth who digs my sex out of my thighs
and beds me a eunuch.

But for those quad-curses are four more
fierce lights that shade all grieving with tenderness
and meaning. Four bags from a magician's dream,
orbed in wonder and the waters that go on forever.

I will not complain or caress my cancer to break
apart my prize.

I will just say my tune is told, and today
my bones hurt but the food
is plenty.

It Happened

It happened when
the air grew thick
as toffee candy
and love slipped into the cupboard
behind a rack full of old clothes.
That is when the lights broke and a new view
came headlong in - one that feels like
holding hands out, spread and still
under placid waters or like
a photo charged with self-contained life.
That is when I stopped speaking about
the same large dream. That was the day I walked up
the stairs and accepted the marks across the wall, dents
in the doors and my aging fingernails.
It happened then like a quote upon my door, read and
re-read at each failing moment.
It happened and has not stopped -
less words now
less of everything and less of the burden
of its heavy worth.

Little boy born

**before sunset
your head a perfect dream,
your hair so soft and gold -
I make my amends at your stroller side
for pain before endured.
I kiss away the darkness that came without solace
and press your small body near.
Little boy of mine
good fortune comes
hard won and not without trial.
Love is everlasting, but never free
of the hardships that make a person appreciate
love
in the full of its glory.
Little child I adore
the smell of your skin
and the movement of your eyes.
I will do my best by you
and God willing, my best
I will not be denied.**

Dad, I think of you

**You fade like a painting in
the sun. After five years,
I remember your voice, the weight
of your walk and the beauty of your proud, kind eyes.
But I cannot fit you in.
I cannot imagine your place with my children or your
responses to my teacup dry
of those other talked-about accomplishments.
I cannot place my load onto your brave and loving mind,
nor need I prove to you my passion
and the quality of my drive.
It is all under water, unfortold, vacant
of those clung-to prophecies.
It is like a draft by a door that can no longer be controlled.
It just enters and chills but either way, it cannot be helped.
Sometimes days go by and you haven't held my thoughts,
and then I retreat, shocked, guilty, propped up before all
these ghosts. Time kills eternity like a footprint on
untouched sand. I love you, but who I am now, with you,
would have never come to stand.**

Siblings

Her laughter breaks your fold,
wedding you to your primal joy.
Your extremes keep tune with her emotions,
setting them close to yours and your
canvas of sharp colours.
She has no veil. You have no hidden chamber,
just the charm of your sleepers
and your dimpled cheeks.
She loves you like kin should,
dancing for your comfort and crazed
intensity. She makes you
happy, her soft voice connected
to you like a necessary limb.
She is just a small child, and you, have not
even arrived that far, yet already
your steps are locked - each one's light clearly
helping illuminate the other's.

Turned

I turn my head
stiff with anxiety's brutality and shame.
I fill my lungs with the cold fumes
of survival and find myself
lost from the legacy of miracles on my garments,
lost from the jewels under every stone in my yard.
I turn my head
and I see again the gifts that pull me through,
every time, each time at the last minute.
So why do I suffer in doubt, blistering
with fears that never hold water? The world
teaches me it is calculating and void of mercy.
God teaches me of only mercy, of treasures
astounding and undeserved but given with the love
of a thousand parents to their only child, teaches
me not to listen to the babbling crowd so full
of good advice and my future's concerns.
God speaks of grace, with grace manifesting at each
brick corner I face. At every impossible deliverance,
I am delivered.
I release my held-back breath.
I accept your goodness like a song that has finally
developed to fruition, sunning the darkness once so coveted
in my head -
turned.

Into My Mortal

I look at the deck
where my vintage love was torn
and spoiled with smoke and hard tales,
told after sundown and music being judged
beneath a piercing sky.
Outside where my personal angel
binds her matterless arms,
a voice reels like heavy breath.

My children are autumn born,
as though humming and hewing out new
pictures to awe over and learn the endless
plateaus of heaven.
I am on all sides in a Sunday,
charged by what I do and do not do.

It would be paradise,
but often the coat rack and broken switches get in the way.

The Bane of My Hypocrisy

**Point - a head twisted backwards,
gazing with upside-down eyes
at the rainy world, a tightly woven
madness that is interrupted at the moment
of release, beauty recovered
but broken before experienced - an acorn
crushed by a car wheel - the treacherous and
oblivious - a candle looked at but never lit.
It is the time of a baby's teething, when pain drools out in
a flooding aftermath of unnameable agony.
This is the child who
has no use for the outside world. This is me curled into
a dull surrender - unsure if there is a next move,
if there will be a time when I can rid myself of the bile
filling my belly - the corporate pimps and sluts, the self-
important money-makers, the big little people,
these devil's minions who try to bury me in their fear
and their soulless security, panting at my doorstep
with their sewn-on smiles and breath
of fresh infant's blood.**

Just Believing

I will turn while in my days of darkness
and feast upon fireflies.

A new groove will capture my flight
and lift chairs from the floor.

I will be the one whose radio still sounds,
whose sandwich has been eaten
and whose telephone calls have meaning.
It is just a matter of believing in mercy
and not much more.

It is appreciating the smell of my baby's neck
and the times when reading with my child. It is
the love songs I hear every day and moments of stillness
that surround.

The brick will separate from the wall and cause
an unsteady hold. The days will turn over
and the unexpected will enter
to bless then break
my fall.

What Can?

Because I cannot
what I can not,
the labyrinth outside
is overwhelming. But what will come
down the slanted shingles
and tree trunks is a tomorrow
I strain to name in spite
of my heart's foreboding.
Like a first laughter
awakened in a baby's mouth or the child
who is finally old enough to be allowed freedom
to control and cope,
the way out is in,
to give nothing to fear
or the waste on the side of the road.
Because I cannot
what I can not,
I see a pinprick void and
a pile-up of perfect little vehicles.
But I can be brave,
I can pray
for things
my days can not.

Friend

Under the frame
needing - a child surging
with need for that maternal hold. I am held
by Jesus - terrible in my river, wondrous
like a colourful bird to my scared vision.
I have found a deeper attachment, a lifeline
that can have no other country - a living gift
to rescue my drowned wishes and comfort
the salted wound. I am pinned down to this divine
nourishment, my blood like the whale's blood,
like the sea lion's shifting in perfect temperature
according to the touch of sea.
I found words that caught the miracle in my hand,
that broke the rock around the gold - sheltering me,
demanding of me a devotion,
that with thoughts alone
I could never hold.

My Little Ones

They go forward
with the brightness of trust
on their backs and with laughter
that loves the other's affection
and humorous ways.

They run water through their chubby hands,
opening and closing fingers in grand delight.
They are testing the ground, days
of love and giving the whole of their intensity
to growing up.

His colour is deep blue and hers is olive
with a yellowish hue.

They grace this home and atone for the damage
of other failed dreams.

They are smiles etched on my shoestrings,
coins under the carpet, a sprinkler in
the noonday sun.

They give and they receive, rich with the substance
of these and of all spectacular worthy things.

Happy Summer Coming

Days of blessings -
my happy family,
a home to lay my pillow in,
a future to work toward
and a spectrum-wide love
that makes all the difficulties
hop the train and head for another town.
Finally a lifting that has taken so long,
an ease permeating floorboards, rising
to level with my nose.
Finally a breaking away from survival's
clamped umbilical cord and a dignity
rushing in to overwrite the hardships.
Days of being satisfied, of no-more-gasping.
Days to let the arms hang relaxed
and give thanks again
for seeing us through.

The Vision

Everglade, a line on the wall.

**The vision flares up and then it sticks -
for mercy and grace surround it as it feeds
then leaves it to chart its own road.**

A baby's belly. Dried food on a shirt.

**The vision knows its worth, but is chewed
to crumbs by survival's demands and by faith
that falls when it is called to risk everything.**

**The vision is fuelled by love as people hurry by
with hopes of security
which mean nothing at death.**

I am out of the whale, into the ocean.

The fly in the corner never had its say.

The vision is God in my bloodstream.

**It takes the last morsel with promises
of returning the soul completed,
blanketed in much more than antiseptic hearsay
and convention.**

Junkie

Below the bending wave,
waving like Medusa's snakes
in mid-air, frantic with
emptiness, broken by
the ruthlessness of time.
All this is like a chant,
like a sore foot in summer.
I am not waiting,
not for death nor for the
impenetrable frustration
of a starving muse.
It is in me like a carnivorous worm,
stealing my insides, throwing me against
the wall, overboard
where nothing but the alien cold
awaits. How many times
must I cry out to claim space for my own?
The thrashing of children,
the noise in even a good afternoon, the demands
of a suckling babe. Hand me the dream, but
give me no time to bathe. It is late.
The autumn winds are drawing near.

The Thing Ahead

On the crust of a fresh fall,
a beginning that may or may-not be
around the corner.
But so I will do the wait or the talk -
I will deal with the bloody aftermath
and press my hands together.
There's not much more that can be taken -
the pipes are frozen and nothing liquid is getting through.
The maggots are worshipping the corpse again
like specks of spotted mould settling on society's throne.
I relate to the stone, and also to the sea
that thrashes against the stone and breaks it down.

Desperation/Affirmation

In the throat like a toothpick
energy sticks and pokes and breaks
capillaries. It is not dirt on the floor
or a week of getting through but it
has turned into a lifestyle of spiritual starvation -
not a moment to read, write, record and delve into
things that change me and hold me to this world.
I cannot do what I used to - even breadcrumbs
have dried into dust and I feel like a new creature
born from anxiety - always at the upper level, never
returning to the core. I feel buried under snow
ready to just fade and fight no more.
I crave for the lips of God.
I am torn asunder like a dried leaf
under a sharp tooth-comb. I am thirsty, still
a poet.

The Last Stance

**The fear settles on my shoulder
like a bug on an eatable leaf.
Imploding as the sun inches across the sky
from morning to twilight. From the
nadir to zenith of all my belongings
and hopes of forgiveness - I cannot swim.
I cannot stand underwater, like this,
a person attached to a puppeteer's strings.
I hide in the cupboard. I turn on the TV
and blood leaves my veins. Countdown.
Counterclockwise the months spin,
happiness is cancelled by anxiety's throne.**

I Split

I split in years around
my tattered body.
I have no grace as I sleep
in this flame and crowd my mind
with futile wondering.
I peel my footprints from
my sidewalk journey
and land like an avalanche
over house and home.
Terror I smelled when the miracle appeared,
and pain is the terror that haunts well
past its time. I am arched
over the sandy mountain waiting on
the tide. Like water, like music - I am proud
to hold you near but I cannot love the way I hoped I could.
I am yellow and swollen with a darkness that has dulled
my lover's appetite. Soon trees will be bare.
And silence is like grief, holding me O too near.

Weather

Walls shake
under the pressure of an ongoing storm.
The storm exhausts
birds in flight and flings
squirrels to the ground.
The ground is hard with ice
and the lost promise of spring.
Spring, children wait for
under the volatile sky.
The sky is tuned by the fingers of time.
Time cannot give a chance accepted or refused
but is the measure by which all things move and die.
Die, the storm is thinning like the skin of a worn drum,
leaving its signature beat on the road.
The road I base all my faith on is under my sleeve
sure of me, regardless if I turn or if I follow.

The Hand That Came

**The hand that came from
the cool water, reached
upon my deck to soothe
my extremes. The sun that
flowered green crumbled
across the twilight tide and painted
me a joy before unseen.
I watched the breaking waters
and felt it drifting over my skin like a spring-fresh leaf -
soft, majestic and full of promise.
The new seal was made, the old one broken.
It is the third birth.
A skull had fallen into my pocket and my secret
sold to dull fantasy. The waiting was cruel.
But the hand that came stripped me of my scars
and gave me an altar to place
my dying future upon.**

A Better Life

**In the beginning
I rode a burning steed,
crossed a violent river
and destroyed my home.
But now my footsteps are slower,
I never climb the rocks or chase
the landed hawk. I collect shells
for my garden and sing to the great
ocean's waves. I take my children
along the shore and show them how to dance.
I tell them my tales of long ago, though
they offer no interest or praise.
But they love me like a petal does its stem,
each reaching to me to know the effort of
my arms. We eat fruit near the underbrush
then bury each seed, tenderly,
in hot white sands.**

I forgot to remember

**the drive that brought me here,
your face and the windows you leave ajar,
the way you hold a hand to my furrowed brow.
I forgot the feel of your lean body
curled against mine, to take the garbage out and
rake the stench from our yard.**

**I forgot I am not only one, but more because of you
and our own. I was a dead bud
that with your unwavering love
discovered how to feed, remember
and finally, unfold.**

Son - almost one

**Through your eyes
of blue infant glory, fresh
as a yawning bird, I see
heavenly bodies turning
and the last of summer's flowers
appear. Fragile as the space between
the void and faith, your beautiful hands
were born to tower over the stifling air
and shed mercy on my wound.
Your perfect-shaped head is full
of milk and magic. Under your seat,
music flows and you are my light:
a third to add to the other two.
Thank you for your raw temper and
the gemstone of your dimpled smile.
What would my days be without you?
Without the air or this living dream
to behold?**

Daughter - almost five

I live inside the gentleness of your mind.
The subtlest of emotions you grasp
and give back
in soft waves of compassion and trust.
In dreams I find you
beside me for always,
a friend like no other and new
as autumn's first changing leaves.
We have been here before,
filled with joy and good madness -
your eyes rich as the colours of earth
and your rhythm, profoundly ancient
like the dance of a seabird upon water.
Your thoughts and your fast-leaning heart leans out
to the lost and the hurt. Your brush stroke,
and the paints that you choose
reminds me how blessed I am
to love, watch and guide
the unfolding presence
that is perfectly you.

Island of Wolves

The hound dogs surround
in groves of filthy packs.
I cannot say they are bleeding
but I smell their injuries wherever I go.
Their howls linger in the smog cloud
outside my bedroom window.
Who will tame their greed? It is necessary
to have an answer to this destruction - the streets,
the kitchen are in need of repairing. Around the corner,
death drips like a carnivore's favourite dream.
They are following the order of things,
full of hope but immune to all good faith.

Dark Night

Can't

stand the long drawn spike wedging
year upon year into my belly - can't
breathe under this burden of debt
and the cold didactic sentiments of the crowd - can't
live without some relief, some saving grace to upload
this struggle and haul it to the nearest dump - can't
understand the ruthless actions that forsake
the existence of God and paint a false justice on each toenail
to count and display at convenient random - can't
get my head around the hate that jettisons
into my arms because of the path
that has been laid before me - can't
help but try to hold on to the fine threads
of my sanity, to look at love and believe that is all
that matters - can't
keep this cast-iron anchor cuffed to my bones or take
another step in this downfall direction - can't
think in terms of linear hopes and
just-making-it calculations

Can't

do anything but say that I can't
then send this confession
into the wind

It is told again,

**the tale of a woman
buried by family and mountains
of laundry. Hollowed-out with
nothing to speak of, not the love she
feels when she sees her children smile
nor the fire in her lungs that longs to explode
onto the canvas of what kept her alive from
the beginning.**

**It is told again, a week of work and half-sleeping
nights - when joy is in the palm but is hard to
experience, for the poetic nutrients that keep her
mind's eye vivid is robbed of their effect. It is not
time nor eternity but the simple task of claiming what
is hers, of demanding the chance to be on all sides fulfilled.**

**It is told again,
but this time she will break the cards differently -
her chores will be abandoned but her children will see
their mother as one who refuses to hurt
beyond repair, who holds herself an equal
and never releases
the grip.**

In The Day

**In the morning, cured,
claimed and finally welcoming the wind.**

**In the early afternoon,
assembling the fragments of my faith
like the bones of a bird and then giving it the key
to fly.**

**In the evening, close to dark,
hair-clipping all disheveled expectations,
pin-pointing a place to lay down, to rest and witness
the uneventful view.**

**In the night time, quietly kissing my children,
speaking of a golden tomorrow with my husband
but feeling the weight of one-more-day without.
In the bed, almost asleep, checking and re-checking
memories and failures, then unbuttoning to bathe
in the numerous blessings laid before me
this day, this year**

deep in darkness

afterall

no matter.

The Quiet That Comes

**The quiet that comes
at a fork-in-the-road, quiet
as we listen to the direction of the breeze
and hope for a voice to bellow forth at our queue,
is the quiet of waiting, the time between
pressing-play and music.**

**The quiet that haunts and never leaves
in times of action, just stays hidden like a spider
behind the bookshelf, slowly emerging
on the dark carpet for a clear view
is the quiet of awareness.**

**The quiet that consumes
like a poison steadily, in droplets
ingested or like a picture of a lost loved one
that follows from room to room, is the depths of a pit
where our future is carved on.**

**The quiet that heals after the hell
like a promise of spiritual safety,
is the quiet of peace, a gift
for where ever circumstances
lead - a show of mercy after
the acceptance of our defeat.**

Arrived

The rhythms of sleep on the bed,
heavy as a grieving eye
are found formed together
in open conversation.

We believed in the living word,
wild with inspiration. And drowning,
we still believe as we wade in these
bad feelings and a difficult disease.

There could be a swift rescue.

There could be captivity,
but the plan of God is greater
than this inept inheritance.

Constellations, I know nothing of.

But I know the countryside, and I know
a family of the deepest purity.

Because

Because of you
my heart has hatched
its most treasured nerve.

I am no longer nagged by the sulphur darkness
that carves away the surface from my lungs.

Because of you
we have two more to join us on our journey.
Two children, ruled by humour and the deep-drawn breath.
I no longer need false conversation,
struggling to understand the flow.

Because of you
my love has learned how to conjure more love,
reap then sow.

At Last, Returning

In somersaults I passed
through a field of evergreens.
I saw with sunken eyes the light
of all who were worthy to praise, and in turn,
be a part of a living relationship.
I counted my cats and blocked myself from
every shadow. Days were beautiful.
Even poverty seemed like a mission to
accept and uphold. The evergreens dried yellow
and insects burrowed into their bark.
Then the light burned and faded to cold.
A long, tortuous shedding
of falsities and natural dreams. It is good
to be naked, to be finally at ease with the way
I always have been - reincarnated
into the old.

The Flood

Glorious weather, wetting
the decks and smallest of worms.
We were made to split the light
with voices singular and clean.
We were destined to wade in
night, free of logic, partakers
of heart-wrenching dreams.
I name myself lost but loved
and that is better than any key.
I count the madness in cracks
and know the world is ready to turn.
Funerals and baby births and
a barn alive with birds, soon
clouds will come and the zodiac will
burn.

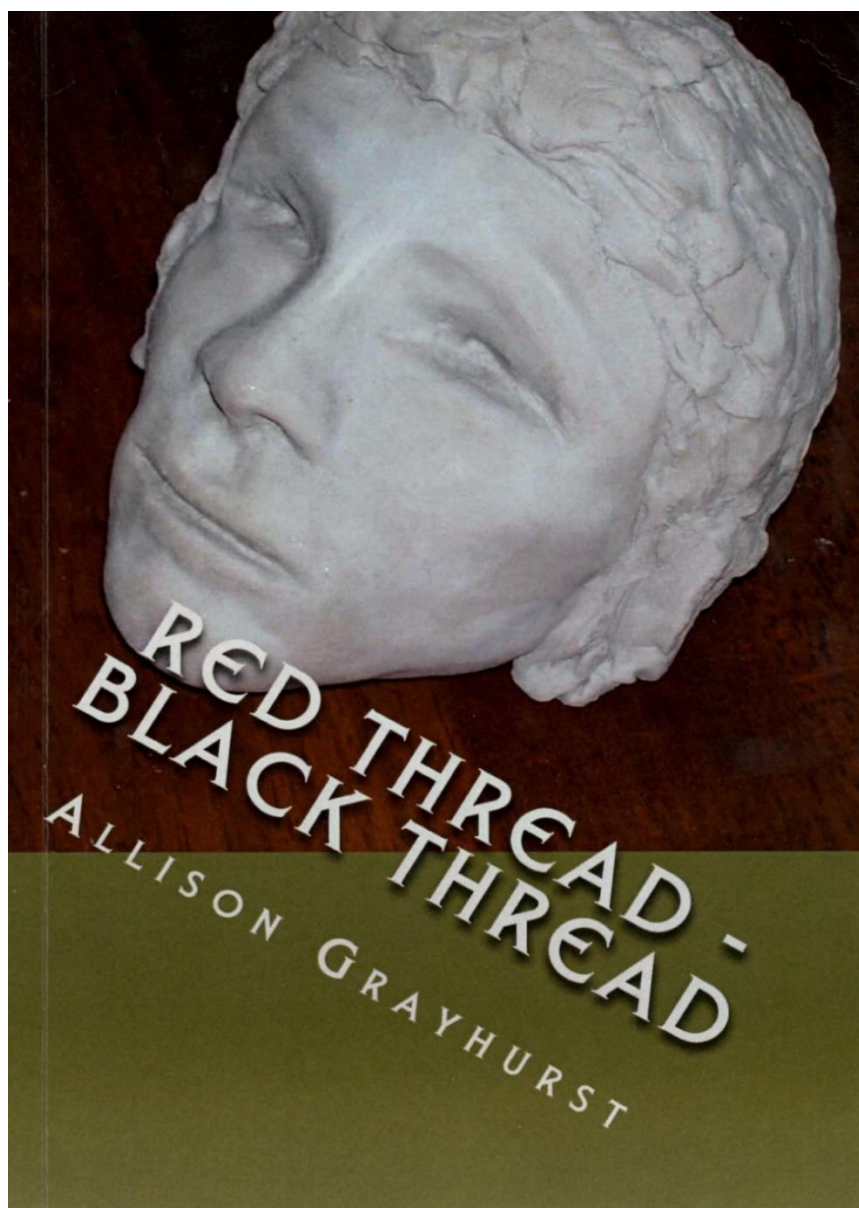
God will be full of joy
and each household will be looking
in a new direction - close-to-the-bone,
materially threadbare.

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:

The Greensilk Journal; Beatnik; Pirene's Fountain; Studio Journal; Poetic Licence; Bursting Plethora of Rainbow Colors; Extract(s); The Write Room; Storm Cellar; Boston Poetry Magazine; Writers Haven Magazine; Jellyfish Whispers; The Seventh Quarry; Anchor & Plume: Kindred; The Blind Vigil Revue; Torrid Literature Journal: Evolution; Poetry Pacific; The Screech Owl (magazine and anthology 2014); Torrid Literature Journal: Erosion; Wilderness House Literary Review; Poetica; Our Poetry Archive, Contemporary Women's Poetry Anthology; Medusa's Kitchen; Shot Glass Journal; Peeking Cat Poetry Magazine; Chicago Record Magazine; PoetryMagazine; Dreaming Big Publications; Imaginary Conversations Lit Page; Malevolent Pegasus Literary Zine; Gossamer Poetry Page; SilverSpine Poetry Forum; Writing Raw; Birmingham Arts Journal; Nature Writing; BareBack Magazine; Temporary Lunatic Literary Zine; October Hill Magazine; The Peregrine Muse; above/ground press; Creek Side Writing Forum; EskimoPie; Allegro; Mothers Always Write; Stone Face Literary Zine; Dark Blooms Literary Zine; Profiles in Poetry Literary Zine; Thirteen Myna Birds; Wildflower Muse; In Between Hangovers; TwitchFit Lit Writing Zine; Tangerine Heart Poetry Zine; Junk in July Poetry Zine; Outlaw Poetry; Urtica; Spirit Fire Review; Grease Monkey Literary Forum; Vine Figure Poetry Page; The Camel Saloon; Poet's Corner; Walking Is Still Honest; Beatnik; Stay Weird and Keep Writing Publishing; Antarctica Journal; Moongate Motherbird; The Bees Are Dead; The Octopus Review; Contemporary Poetry - An Anthology of Present Day Best Poems; First Literary Review-East; Crisis Chronicles Press; Gris-Gris; Iron Gall Press; Eleventh Transmission

Book Review of "Into My Mortal":

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born," *Anne Burke*, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus, 2014.



Red Thread - Black Thread

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

Red Thread – Black Thread
Copyright © 2006 by Allison Grayhurst
First addition
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage, retrieval and transmission systems now known or to be invented without permission in writing from the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover Art (sculpture):
“Draw Near” © 2012 by Allison Grayhurst
Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Grayhurst, Allison, 1966-
Red Thread – Black Thread

“Edge Unlimited Publishing”
Poems.
ISBN-13: 978-1478244189
ISBN-10: 1478244186

Red Thread – Black Thread by Allison Grayhurst
Title ID: 3937434

Table of Contents

the sub-angels	224
Far and Here	225
How Like	226
A Newly-Patterned Fingerprint	227
Happiness Approaching	228
A New Front Door	229
Shore	230
We Arrive	231
Blown	232
In Front	233
Torn	234
III	235
A thank-you-note	236
Headlock	237
Until	238
They Took	239
Home II	240
Gone Blind	241
Remembering	242
Threshold	243
Freedom to Admit	244
An Act of Love	245
Draw Near	246
What I Shine For	247
One Light	248
The bough breaks	249
Faces of hope	250
First and Only	251
Another Level	252
My Flower	253
Lost Shadow	254

His Glimmer Escapes, Then Grows	255
We Ask For Light	256
Insecure	257
Forest Fire	258
We Hold These Persons	259
Something to See	260
The Bite	261
By The Days	262
The Wind	263
Blizzard	264
A Deal	265
Wallpaper Stars	266
To Leave This Sickness	267
Now You Know	268
Liquid Art	269
The Burn	270
Pitstop	271
The Day Is Like	272
Faith	273
The Luminous Light	274
In	275
Where Love Draws The Line	276
The Path Least Expected	277
Feral	278
I Will Not	279
The Singular Sky	280
It May Be Coming	281
Compromise	282
Hostage	283
Our Days	284
Airtight	285
Susceptible Creatures	286
After this	287
Promise	288

A Change To Cherish	289
Thunder To Cross	290
Gifted	291
In The Thighs	292
The Mind That Sings	293
From Us Two	294
The struggle of water	295
Five Days	296
Another Station	297
Exhumed	298
I see the light I thought I lost	299
What I found	300
The Stone	301
Regret	302
Resolve	303
Take This!	304
Heat	305
Blind Spot	306
Without Soul	307
Crossroads	308
Easter Faith	309
Days that dismantle	310
Looking Up	311
Choice.	312
In My Corner	313
Nothing	314
Trap	315
Let The Joy In	316
Perfect Home	317
Tomorrow	318

the sub-angels

In hand
under foot
they sing for us
but they do not know our names.
They cry for us
but will not hold us close
to let their light in,
to let the heart-of-the-lizard
out.
They are with us
like candles on the tips of a bare tree
but they are not here
for us
only here
like a butterfly is
awing us with its glory
then passing and leaving all
as it once was.

Far and Here

Far from the small-talk daze
and this season I long to unload,
my hands are open
but numb from the cold.
My body turns the colour of moonlight
glowing, hollow, a thing only of reflection.
My last chance came and went.
Everywhere power escapes me
and the place I live is wrought with extremes,
incapable of toning down.
In the sandpit of my mind
the pit-patter of small feet
goes undetected - I hear only
the wail of those who fell by the gestures
of the corrupt and greedy.
I hear faint and desperate echoing
like spider-feet moving across a tongue.
I hear and I am listening to nothing else.
I am far from a solid core,
far from the plane ride to paradise,
far from the sodium dream,
but I am here
and here
I am looking around.

How Like

How like
the bright closed door
and the pockets whose insides
slice the fingertips.

How like
the muttering offended
and innocence so easily lost,
like the make-up removed from a clown.

How like
cramped curiosity
and the hurdle of the legend of the hero
who is almost always an orphan,
as if that enormous loss is the only pain large enough
to make the hero whole.

How like
the nocturnal shouting soul
and the half-hour games that burn that soul,
useless and cold.

A Newly-Patterned Fingerprint

It's the end
of my kind,
the last of my line
unfolding.
And then
all of it will be different -
both the edge and the enlightenment,
the things precise
and the things undefined.
All that was smouldering
will be set ablaze,
and beauty and grace will be overflowing
like a drip-drop dream pure as reality.
It is the end - the place of no more new beginnings,
a place where the perfect light cannot fade
or grow too bright, where ironic timing transforms
into an integrated, balanced life.

Happiness Approaching

(angst is the awareness
of our separation
from God)

Maybe working
the wrong direction,
working the plain side
instead of the hard side
like liberty on my tongue
and a white line drawn across
my lips.

The line was crossed
with a thumbnail and a toothpick.
The line was walked
before the maple tree grew
up to be a child's special vision.

The dream was broken,
stretched to destruction
by waiting too long
for fulfillment.

Somehow drawing
sometimes passing
but always reaching
the indefinable clarity
that arrives at the moment
of completeness.

A New Front Door

**She knows the pull of a season is ending.
The point on the wall she fixed
with a solid-eye is shifting like light
moving through jelly.
And all the while an ease is finding its way within,
unfolding inch by inch. It may
take a season or a few years to bloom
but her palette has moved to a shade brighter.
The toys are cleaned and the bookshelves too.
She moves onward as the lilacs and lilies
extend up, bold like a wealthy woman's perfume.
The dread is draining from her system.
The rain will arrive and she knows that day will be fine,
with or without shelter.**

Shore

Moving away from
directions found
in the night,
as odd as waking up
on a foreign planet
with multiple moons
and a different-toned sun.
But I feel all my madness falling -
a thousand fears.
I feel what I found
by moving away
from the pain that needed to be
left behind.

We Arrive

**We arrive at the mountain's artery,
here in heaven's wind, not bending,
not drowning but tall as the mountain
itself.**

**We are intact from this decade-season
of insects and peril. Grief is not in our
arms nor is the locust's bitter bite.
We are content on this rock, replenished
by each other's kindness and by
our children's uncommon smiles.**

**We have lived with this thirst for so long and now
we are almost overflowing, not wanting or
tight-throat or quarantined by poverty's
pickled pill.**

**We give our thanks at this place
of somewhere over the threshold.**

**We have light, we have octagon curves.
Everything is lengthening, lifting
like a hangman's hood.**

Blown

Blown like a grain of sand from a hollow twig.

It is beautiful to be blown.

Blown, into the winding forward thrust
where good happens with the movement
of each day and the fire-cracker burn
is a burn of celebration.

Carried through the radar-stream
into an easeful position where
the goal is getting nearer at a slow pace
and old patterns are disintegrating,
remembered but not renewed.

In Front

**The line in front
is the line crossed
then left to rot under
the blazing day. The other side
is not to be feared but held
up like an appreciated toy.
The way out the door
is the door your father gave you when he died
and placed death's rattle under your pillow
for the rest of your days. It is the door
that won't let you forget
how short a season life is.
The chain around your neck
is a chain of small but frequent miracles
that has sustained and held poverty at bay.
It is to be counted on when the last of the nectar
has been spilled on the rug and indifference consumes
the eyes of friend and kin like roundworm, there
even in the most difficult of barren
January days.**

Torn

**I know the vines
that pin a desire to the dirt.
I walk the miles of compulsive despair
that laps all light from the stream.
I sit bound to the spot. In and out
of days with blood under my fingernails
and hands that can't stay still.
Have I not given enough? Have I placed
meaning in the marketplace or belief
in the computer-screen throne
of inner Armageddon? Like a split
artichoke, my shadow lands on stone and on grass.
It is only shadow but heavy
in its dues.**

III

Framed in stone
like a relic pressed underground,
the days are tiring. The news
is pounding at my brain,
news of a tell-tale war and murder
under the bed sheets.
Mostly I am a tree, solid in my roots,
proud of my leafy foliage.
Mostly I am grateful for the working
light bulbs, for the kindness of others that
pushes me along. Mostly I am happy here,
pinned to this abundance of love, not looking
outside for a four-leaf clover.
Mostly my level is strong, but today
as I'm sinking - I relish the relief of tears it brings.

A thank-you note

I liked you for your love
of the little creatures, for the wild,
unsavoury animals that others
have no use for - like rats, tortoises
and cats that are blind. I liked you
for the wound you kept a mystery -
something about your father and a
despair that set you apart from the rest
of the living. I liked our full-blown connection
that seemed to conquer time and mistrust and
prepare for us a feast of sisterly ways.
For a year we held close.

In that car ride through
the farmlands, once I feared you might stop and stab me
under that canopy of stars and darkness. Because
there was something terrifying about you -
something hurt and distorted
by a tremendous overload.

One day you stopped calling,
stopped speaking about poetry,
your dog and your love-affairs
gone wrong. Months later you wrote me a letter,
explaining the days that kept you from me -
days of being unable to eat, get dressed
or even call on the phone. For me, it was
too late. Too much so soon and then, nothing.
Like a betrayal I could never get used to,
like a friendship I would always be wondering
when it would vanish.

Only later did I learn your last name.

Headlock

It runs away to the room
where nothing moves, not from dying
not from finding its joy.
It was warm, but is now harmed
and drenched in grief like a child too broken
to speak or dream
 of flying.

It breaks the base of my heel,
preventing a hope-filled dance. It knows me
in the afternoon, stealing the smoke from my ribs,
the hunger from my muscles and the flesh
from my gender.

It circles me at night like an eastern cloud,
cutting the black with its grey, changing the words
in my dictionary, spilling my love in unnatural oil.
It is my creature to contend with, the armour
I have been sworn to carry,
a twist in the brain that has me soiled, taking cover
in its inhospitable hovel.

Until

the path of darkness
for you and of self-righteousness
for her no longer matters, until only what matters is
this blending of two
imperfect souls, showing the way
to self-discovery
by entwining despair and faith,
by enduring and then by releasing endurance
and allowing death and the miracle after death
to set in . . .

They Took

**They took away
the long and leisurely shave.
They took the dark and sensuous hood
and peeled it away
to shadeless bold colours -
everything bright and nothing
integrated.
They took the comforting depth
and put in its place a bad commercial.

They took the swelling stars.**

Home II

From the crossed arms
of an artist
to the embrace
of an ordinary connection,
joy comes in the privacy of this room
of this inner core
of four
chaotic souls,
roped together, each one linked
equally to each other,
each one a supreme balance to
the other, four in sync,
like the elements
that make the Earth
a living substance.

Gone Blind

Gone blind down
the road that leads to
serenity. Cannot find
the open casket of my
awakening or the joy of exile.
Damned and committing to
the poorest of temples -
ruby like a miscarriage
or a red flag at half mast,
the spasm of a studied darkness
emerges in my mouth like a thrill
worth all its pleasure.
Everything but the torment is unclear
and that is my stigmatism, my success
and my heroic danger,
that is the sunny day I never find.
But the foliage of my terrain is too familiar
to be trouble, though my eyes remain as shells
where once a glorious creature flourished.

Remembering

Climb on board
where mystery is sharp
and dangerous. The red light
flashes on the cold embittered face -
a pale grey against a rich tone
of burgundy and black.
On my shoulders, age and history are taken
and every memory is pure, whole, experienced
by the senses, is coming back
like chaos ringing all around.

Threshold

Hand over mouth
holding
the breath
in
because the dream
is so thick
it coats your skin in
its hot jelly until it is
your only protection.
It is so full of impossibilities
and false starts.
It is the problem
that never lets loose
an answer, that never
bends its back on
any account.
Caged in, but in love
holding hope
like holding the body of a ghost.
Your faith must surpass
death, must embrace
the end without knowing for sure that there will ever be
a new beginning.

Freedom to Admit

Almost dead
but not afraid
nor believing
that death will come.
Down, past centuries
with a flaw like glass
embedded in my heel
or like each day coming, going
without release in that day.
Farther from the umbrella
farther from the impossible
shadowless valley
from where the rich chestnuts grow
and comfort finds its way close to the
trembling chest.
Almost dead
and never quite
reviving.

An Act of Love

**A chance I took,
but then I took too much.
I passed the hat and
couldn't leave a donation.
I dove into the puddle
and came up - nose scratched,
fingers broken.
I came up
far off from the stage,
in a remote spot
where light never goes,
came up like a cactus in
a swamp,
taking a chance
that bound me
with flawless inevitability
to only earth.**

Draw Near

One day the drift drew near
and lightning touched the lips of angels.
The light was left only for the mighty.
So we sang. So we sang.
The murderers were shelved
beside the mighty because the only difference
was degree.
We opened ourselves up while in the rain, open
under the dark cloud, open
through the winters and the occasional plague.
We felt the evergreens between our fingertips
and sold only that which was ours to sell.
One day the drift drew near
and we sang. We sang.

What I Shine For

Smile like a caterpillar
curled in the light
and then plucked into bird food
by an unforeseen flight.
Smile under siege
for all the dreams owned and lost
and re-owned as an unrelinquishable part.
Smile and deal with what is crushed
and with what is not
but instead has sprouted a
bold beginning - a tree of strange scent.
Smile but never let it fully out
because the days spin weary
and the white has faded from the walls.
Smile, confined like a pearl where
it is set.
Smile and accept yourself
forever hanging
from this thin translucent
thread.

One Light

that sails the final way,
dreams the book open, gives
and gets its power from the place
of no middle ground.

One light that knows that the grey space
sandwiched between life and death
 between faith and Godlessness
is not, can not, has never been
there.

One light that is light
like water is water
and nothing more.

One light that redefines the passageway
of the body's nerves,
that is the way of keeping whole,
the only necessary blessing.

One light infiltrating the nail grooves,
that answers only that which is not
intuitive-denying action, dismantles
the rules of the world while offering
so much more.

The bough breaks

and dreams collapse uncushioned
like the smile that forsakes me
and the wonderful illusion of things past
but never lost.

For here I cut my antennae down
and kiss the pyramid on my grass,
blessed by the end result
but never by the happening:

I know the world
and it needs forgiveness.

For here the smell grew toxic
and the glass filled to overflowing,
but the grime inside never got better,
though polished every day.

For here I cradle my body to sleep,
the long way down is the only way down
and we are sold by the scars upon our throat,
by the longing discarded that never knew it
could end

and by the only relationship we are all
bound to have - our stronghold with or
not with

God.

Faces of hope

I watch the future
as I watch the motions
of your lungs. I see
so much change and so astounding a discovery.
I see two asleep, plenty full
of love, bearing themselves up
against the world. I see the frames
of two who have no boundaries,
who have extraordinary powers
in ordinary reality, who have presence
and beauty with the added blessing
of fitting in.
I see the advances of light on your skins.
I see the unexpectancy of time
in the simplicity of your smiles.

First and Only

The first time I found you
at the donut shop with the perfect balance
of youth and torment
absorbed in every movement, I knew I found
an eternal friend. The first time you sang, I felt
a fiery and surprising happiness.
The first hug we shared on the church steps
as the music played below was like a wave,
strong and soothing
rippling along my back and arms.
Our first kiss outside the café, when the rain
was about to fall, told me there would be
no number to our days, no greater gift but
to feel this - our lips once apart,
now vibrant, like a new being.
Our first laugh together as we drank our coffee told us
the depths we shared could be lightened by one another,
gave us more than important conversation, gave us
a rope to sometimes swing on and to always hold.
Our two children born were more than bluejays
on our shoulders,
more than any joy gone before, bringing us further
into one another's arms. Blessed by this indelible love,
I am here, counting on nothing but on what we have,
strangely at peace, like the peace I found
the time I first found you.

Another Level

Buzz from the wind cloud,
over the cable lines
and the heads of barn owls.
Shadows are bleeding through the brick
until they seep indoors, pressing in on the furniture.
I know the pattern on the ceiling,
I have witnessed this road so many times
before - to be twisted and toyed with
until finally broken - freed
of the false trap,
the inauthentic hold that holds me
in its manic, brutal indifference
like a fly in a jar looking for air-holes.
Thank you for that jar - to remind
me of the difference between atmospheres -
between common kindness and the evil like pinpricks
that sticks absentmindedly in the cavity of the throat.
Thank you for showing me the carelessness of those fixed
on this world and the generosity of others
that numbs my day-to-day pain
until I am admonished, awakened and ready to soar.
From out of the cave we decide
and then are divided. I choose you.
Make me good and brave - enough
to outshine this phyllo-dough hell.

My Flower

**A strange cup of blending flavours,
expelling creatures from the side of the house.
A gift is given, a gift is received,
making good the sickness of the spirit
by giving equal strength to bear the need.
I hold these cards. I hold them without decision
or seeing another way to stand.
I lift my umbrella and love the rain.
It is my stance that will-power or therapy cannot change.
In waves, the darkness spins around. But I am
owned by you. At your core I find my womb and
my stretching ground. Help me to see,
these disappointments that plague
will never leave, but your love will heal and the healer
will not condemn.**

Lost Shadow

When the song started
and the dream was torn from its socket
then placed on the sidewalk,
the light from the window broke
and in came the lost shadow.
I saw that shadow but stared it down
thinking it would only last a short season.
The shadow stayed, made its way behind
bookshelves and old picture frames.
Since then I can't say what is a reflection
and what is truly bright.
The favourite plan has burned in the meadow,
the secondary one has too.
If we are right, we cannot touch it.
If we are wrong, the sum of all our efforts
and discoveries is naught.
I enter the shadow then I too am left without definition.
At times there is nowhere else to go but further in,
further obliterating my clarity.
That is a grey day for the dream.
Other days I hold my own
and count my gifts. That is the day of perfect weather
when the shadow stays under the bathtub
and tomorrow is fine.

His Glimmer Escapes, Then Grows

Plunged by guilt
then by a heavenly tale,
he is changed from favour
to detested obscurity.
The breeze rises to harvest
his half-made smile, leaving
him more sacred, more solitary.
Science cannot teach him, nor
do the curfews of other men reach him and seal him
to the plodding mire.
He condemns with stubborn confidence the winnings
of his adversary. Clothed with revelation,
his tongue will wet again,
calling forth a new burn, a new morn
formed beyond his bleak horizon.

We Ask For Light

We ask for light

for the given truth tied to your name.

We ask to break this putrid smog

and allow a breeze to flow.

We ask for forgiveness from the things

we see and do and what we cannot see

but know are in us.

We ask for help when all the help we have been given

is not enough.

We ask for hope, to gain a tangible velocity away

from this stifling mire.

We ask for your tenderness, to peel the hardened layers,

unblock our view, our way through, to blow

this atrophied cocoon.

We ask, though we cannot offer more

than our asking, not more than our supplication.

We ask with all we held onto, dropped -

stranded, unclothed and absolutely knowing we are

welded to your mercy.

Insecure

Blasted white
like a star - there but not there
at its true awakening.
I run forward.
I cover my lips with a vintage coin
and chant tomorrow out of sight.
There are times I cannot keep
such tension as I should -
as a petal in my palm, balancing my movement
with the pull of the wind
so as not to lose its texture to the ground.
There are times when the sunlight frames me,
frightens me, echoing like a victim's misery
through these patchy walls.
I am drowsy, excluding hope but not contempt.
Will I live here, stagnant in this sickness?
What I need is a bed that does not hurt as I sleep,
that can endure my heavy days and feed me strength
from its quilt.
It is the meat of destiny I am famished for.
Reclining in my hand-made coffin,
I value the cold cold sky.

Forest Fire

Faltering in this season
on the hook like a sandpiper
never sure when the mountain stops
or if my sedentary position
is really a bird in my hand
or a dream I cannot force.
Where I crawl from ignorance
and dry despair, my mouth is finished
with kissing, finished with speaking
its voice of obscure ecstasy.
Because it is finished, it is night
and my plight is solitude.
I have lost my home
and clothes of wild colours.
I have lost and cannot gain
a chance to govern the crowd within.
My foliage is painted. My sun is slaughtered,
but still so much heat remains.

We Hold These Persons

**We hold these persons sacred
because she is larger than herself,
beautiful and simple, and he is the deepest moments
always on the surface.**

**Hers is steadfast and tender,
hers is fierce and dignified.
Hers is the kind heart in open view
and the trust of a one so pure.**

**His is the intaking soul and the outpouring
of complete vulnerability,
of defiant vulnerability.**

**His is the heart in someone else's eyes.
His is a mischievous joy, a gentle hello,
the hug of a million sages,
the hurt of a drunkard's unspoken truth.**

**Hers is the rapture of every bird,
a voyage through a multi-layered atmosphere.**

His is raw and chiming.

Hers is on pressure while soaring a light blue sky.

Something to See

By the exit, by the winding path
the brave and the bleeding have gathered
like this, they cry out for a shoestring of mercy
and receive a little more than their worth.
I add the answers together and find
no love lacking. Yet, the ache remains, tattooed
onto the pavement like an empty wallet
driven into fresh tar.
And I remain under the cutthroat justice
of practicality.
Years of fighting, no more fighting for
that which God does not want to give.
Bitter is the paper that has my vision marked.
I must let my eyes water, walk through and arrive
like something fresh
on a foreign road.

The Bite

It is in the bite
in the loins, born
from a deeper urgency
than the stuff outside the window.
This season is split,
it mends nothing and breaks
only that which has already been broken.
The rabid sorrow that has no voice
but lurks like a scream through
the corridors of the body.
It has been so long - the same cloud
latched to our roof, the same cry
of indignation and then pleading.
We have held out for release but the pressure
is locked and we must bear the journey.
We are left with the many devices of coping -
sure of God and nothing more.

By The Days

By the day
the evening comes.
By the evening the
stars emerge.
By the clock
what's not
of substance falls
away and this is what
we carry as one
along with the dragged-around
dish cloth and the tomato seed
we long to (but never) bury.

The Wind

The wind was moving
across the leper earth.
I saw that wind and that earth
in a vision building strong
as the autumn chartered on.
The sparrows sank into that earth,
each one carrying its own
unique song.
I was a sparrow filled with seeds,
sitting on sand in the sun
sure of all things. Then I was sucked
into the sick earth, breathing in
worm-infested dirt - myself,
forgotten, dead as a broken-off stick,
not even making a shadow.
In a vision I rose up a ghost -
a stronger sparrow now lacking substance.
I found a tree to claim and share.
And in that vision as the wind was moving,
it moved me
no longer.

Blizzard

Blank, clean, unseen like white paper mache
over a white balloon.

The cold days when children hold hands
over the vent, bodies bundled en mass
in this season

of winter's utmost, with beauty
and barrenness both -

The snow in constant consistent
movement, moving like in a gorgeous painting,
itself still, reflecting
nature's absolute conquest.

Showing no favourites - the snows
gather on rooftops, glide over sidewalks and over
birds huddled in eavestroughs.

The snows that make life surrender,
leaving us motionless as we should be,
unashamed of our pure ineffectualness.

A Deal

He spoke in half-measures,
justifying each moral-ill.
He spoke of relativity and of substance
in the greed of the superficial.
He spoke to me under the rooftops
of the rich, caressing me into believing
that there was no absolute truth,
demanding the fingerprints from my body and each drop
of my worldly self-worth.
He came to me with gifts for my children
and wanted my gratitude eternal, my nodding
and smiling and happy-go-lucky awe of each
of his earthly treasures.
He offered me ease without relief and
a Sunday-morning-only duty.
He brought me down, brought me into
his thick shadow for a day. For a day
he confused my heart away
from its steadfast meat, fragmented my mind
at the feet of his brittle god.

Wallpaper Stars

At the top of the stairs
sits a box covered
with wallpaper stars. In this box
there is a small coin that
holds the memory of another time.
A child has pushed the box down the stairs
and the light has caught the coin on the way down,
glimmering like the leaves on branches after a rainstorm.
I pick up that coin and I take it away.
I am better than the coin that fell,
but less than the child sitting and
staring and waiting for the coin, sure
of the gift like Job was sure of God's love. I once was
the same, now I am different, tainted as grownups
always are.
The box is empty but I will fill it again.
The box is beautiful like the child who
sits and smiles - coin between fingertips, knowing
its proper place - inside the box
covered
with wallpaper stars.

To Leave This Sickness

I am sick like the bug-eaten rose or
the old awaiting death.

I have been reversed,
thrown into the garbage can.

There is nothing to come that will help,
nothing to hold the two halves of my head
together. I shout out. I stop shouting and
silence is what I have.

I am through with myself, with this
ungoverned agitation mounting and
hurling at others - then imploding like a thousand thistles
projectiling on the inside.

I know nothing. Nothing of faith
and of God who I so love.

The car is coming, the blue beam has
arrived. I am going. I want to go
and see myself untrapped
- me, but not this me -
on the other side.

Now You Know

**Now you know the honeydew nectar
spread across the light - like a
limit - sweet but blurring.**

**It comes to blend the black to grey,
falsifying the true colour, gnawing
like an animal at its netted cage.**

**Now your fate is tightened -
has no large space to grow or rest to let it yield
towards strength, but it wanders
half-made, without proportion, agitated
like a mind unable to hold one clear sentence
but can hold terror nonetheless.**

**You do not exist the way you once thought.
You orbit the garden like a predator its prey,
never entering, never making the move to kill,
buckled under such tension, the sound
of your footsteps hurt, revolving,
devolving down the ant hole.**

**Almost decades, you turn from this exit to that exit
never finding the way out.**

**It has been this way. Almost
you can believe no other. Almost
your dream is gone.**

Liquid Art

Warm fluid
reaching my lips, filling my mouth
and strengthening.
I am chased and must
drink to survive, to gain a flow
that does not fit amongst all this normalcy.
It plops like an explosive on my lap
and won't allow me to forget or regret
its pull and command.
Like a ripe peach to the parched throat, it slides down
and radiates relief to all sections of my spine.
It owns me as does the rhythm of my pulse.
It keeps me apart yet binds me as one.
It is my surrender, my glad awakening. It is my freak show,
my unhappy necessity:
 I bite, I swallow
 and then I am brave
 once again.

The Burn

Burnt
on dreams
I leave you now
as a pauper by the wayside,
tossed overboard like one
not good enough.
It sinks in - assimilates
the remaining glory and soon
all is charcoal and cinder.
It is in the flavour of my breath,
it rides my spine and refuses to fully
consume or to let go.
It is what I see when I look
into the open sky:
No one's coming in.
No flower is reaching
its petals up for me.
The burn is in the way I sing,
the way I wait,
the way I move my lips to
smile or listen.

Pitstop

The thorn of
a hero's anguish
and noble isolation
is not a wand
bearing a secret jewel
but the whisper of sweet suffering
that says it makes a soul better,
braver, ready to do the difficult thing.
It is the step before spiritual freedom,
not a destination, but the line of threshold,
the place of guilt when just before guilt explodes,
eliminating the essence of its own nature.
It is the collecting just before absolute
surrender, the pain in the head that keeps
every touchpoint tense but never releases
the flow. It is the finger hovering over the button,
- a purgatory of necessary importance.

The Day Is Like

The day is like
the day before
the worm arrived
in a jar at my doorstep.
Before I took the worm in
and fed it lettuce leaves and fresh water.
Before I had something to care for,
when loneliness was the largest difficulty around
and isolation pounded beneath my lids like
a cancer.
The day is tick tock and as slow as waiting
for that needed call to arrive.
I collect the noises from outside
but have nowhere to put them. I open my mouth,
but my voice has gone underground.
The sun looks in on me, but evades my skin.
I don't hold my breath. I let it in and out.
I let the day be a blank wall.
And sometimes a day like today is like
an empty room and this empty room
is a treasure.

Faith

It is found,
found in a pocket on a jacket
that has not been worn for years.
It is an emblem of uncharted kindness
that cannot fade even when I falter.
It is a name on a wall
that changes but is always mine.
It is the end result, the start of all
things good.
It is not going to leave me, or seep
through the mattress, underground.
It is so beautiful, it has the whole of my being.
It is speaking to me from billboard signs,
from the ones I loved and lost.
It is the parcel I have been waiting for.
It is my graduation party,
my only hope for recovery.
It is warmth and well being.
It is Friday night.
It is a star-shaped candy,
and it is found.

The Luminous Light

The settling light
that bends a path through my woods
is placed again into the chamber and
has constructed something miraculous.
It has brought what was needed to the forefront
when the shattered, the held-together-by-a-pinprick world
mastered the decree of reality,
and all around and before was grey
and sheered off wings,
when it was hard to remember childhood trust
that trusts that every engraving on the bark
of every tree is deliberately carved with love,
that the sacred purpose of that love is absolute love, is
the purpose - and yes - there is no other plan but
to return to the moment of sweet creation.

In

**The world is bleating,
frying and re-applying
its gruesome coat
of despicable snares.**

**The world is walking in,
shaving down my floor with its footsteps.**

**I touch it like I would
a balloon. I will not allow
it to consume or alter
the course of my aging.**

**I will stand and translate the core of this faith
to my children. I will give them something
to lean on when the world overtakes
and the ones out there lack
even a threadbare mercy
or a glimpse of celestial grace.**

Where Love Draws The Line

Dark swamp surrounding
extremities, the core.
Mass of gangrene hue,
dripping through each hairstrand
and eyelash.
I felt Death talking to me.
It said to relax
into its nullifying void, to break
apart and relinquish my authority.
Then God held out a hand and said
to hold that hand and heal my
hopelessness with faith.
God said to choose this hardship
or choose Death.
God said I will not give you a solution,
only this choice.
God said - I draw this in your reality.
I offer you no escape, I offer
only the rest of spiritual acceptance.
God said
and Death lost its final say.

The Path Least Expected

Afraid as the scent overflows
from the dark and through the sun.
I am watching you but I am
bound to the surface like the
ant to the dirt,
like numbers to the analytical mind.
I am bound to the end whenever it comes,
until I am called
to give it up and called no more to this Earth.
Afraid of the sound of the hollow years
but still myself though I am weaned from
the miraculous and thinned as a once
potent drug, still myself
afraid and bound, holding
a destiny I never uttered
or planned.

Feral

I bend in mourning
bending to the loss of someone
so familiar -
your nurture-needing eyes
and a temperament of molten lava
whose tone was innocent and unrefined.
I see you now in the doorway,
flat and tensing but never moving,
then at ease with me as a soft sigh
overcomes you.
Born in a tight spot -
resigned to a tight spot - isolated
from all but me.
So strange, hard and pure,
unlike any feline I've ever known.
I will miss you, loving you
as one who didn't belong.

I Will Not

**I see the path illuminate.
I arrive with my ways behind me.
I am the one who fell and
could not rise, the one whose hand
reached out but could not let
the python go by, could not find
what I fumbled for in the realm
of wonderful light, but instead
moved my family to an inhospitable shore.**

**Slowly, I receive,
loosening the crusted clay from my loins.
I will be brave as one following
the hooded horse, brave as a bird
extending beyond middle heaven.**

**My purse is wrenched clean, and clean, for now
is good.**

The Singular Sky

Move, I move
but cannot function,
prey to the wrong timing
and a host of flaws I have
not been able to label.
Bend, I bend
to the open coffin.
I am the last one here
to hold my flag and not let go.
There is fog in between
the path I am to follow
and the life that I lead.
The sky is singular, but
I have too many eyes that peer
in false directions, too many gasps of sorrow
and empty sides.
I take
and twist to and fro.
Still the light eludes me
and I am left miles below
the replenishing groove.

It May Be Coming

A glimpse
to keep of a changed afternoon
like grafted skin to a festering wound,
like a painful memory
that will not weaken with time but has learned
to dig and find the blessing within.
Looking out - there are possibilities.
There are strange fabrics in my drawers
and candy wrappers on the floors.
I only hear the quiet pulse of infant hope.
I only feel like turning my head.

Compromise

The poison spills
over the dining room table.
I held hands with the bringers of blasphemy,
then pretended blasphemy
was the way to begin a better life.
Now only half-tied and half-untied
I no longer brood, but bear
a blank stare, folded smooth
at the corners.
I won't admit I left my post.
I move with a wider face,
in this dull aftermath
without terror or hope.
I move heavy-footed -
the last traces of passion
sliding between my toes.

Hostage

Death is here,
blocking the vents,
betrothed to this January month.
It is here and it won't leave.
It is here like a crack in a doll's head
where all the bad weather pours in
and builds until the frame is broken
and the child remains without.
Death is not soothing
but grates like granite against glass
and takes with it all sense of sanity.
It severs the fingertips and holds
the mind hostage in its slow decline.
It clings like hot molasses, here
it clings and makes a pit in every
bright spot.
Here, death is, ugly death, no-way-around-it death.
Death riding the back of one I love.
Death, owning all,
making no concessions, offering
no apologies.

Our Days

I place my arms up here
reaching for you in the morning
at half-past six and later
when you are just waking, disheveled
and wishing to return to dreams.
In the afternoon when we
finally talk, the brightness of the day
absorbs into your face and what is left
is the movement of our connection
between coffee mugs and our children's play.
At dinner, you tell me stories.
I see the years behind us, and for a moment the
curtains of heaven draw back before my eyes.
At night when we hold and the children sleep,
we talk of the unspeakable things - ourselves for a time,
fully happy - two together
in the arena of society's plight,
two together, beholden
to only this love.

Airtight

Trouble is tearing
across rooftops,
and the one thing left to count on
is tainted by self-righteous conviction.
The blue in the sky is burnt.
The answer that arrives is conspicuous
and truth sits on the post unable
to touch ground on either side.
Abiding in power, abiding in
religious hate - all the gates of evil
are unlatched and the songbird lies
flat, stiff-legged on its side like
a mutated lullaby. What is called love is squishy,
retractable and never a priority.
Trouble is full and always filling
the cracks in every open seam.
What is called good gets its name
from the TV screen and the golden-calf-god
of hip.

Susceptible Creatures

Blending in with the trunks
of maple trees. Here
like the shedding of cells
or growing hair follicles.
I will not speak today of the poison
thickening my soup, nor will
I speak of the weight compressing
my lungs. For some angels have swarmed me
and I promised them silence. This dying will be hard
like choking on a breadstick.
But after that is through, nobody
will break me. After that, dancing
will be made easy, and breathing will mean nothing
but a gentle flow
of in and out.

After this

there is no other.

There will be the curtain charred
by deliberate fire.

There will be the food stomped
between floorboards and the
smile of faint sardonic recognition
at all the repulsive and petty senselessness
that lurks beside every phone call.

But there won't be the hanging around,
or the deep dive into a suicidal quagmire.

After this, the energy stops
going where the devil leads,
going under the beams of sun
pulling flowers from the garden
at rapid speed and cursing the air around me.
After this, I can outlive any black star.

Promise

**When the end that was supposed to be
defuses its eventuality
and my belly is maimed by fear,
I will wait, nose to the floor.**

**Sparkles on my fingers and thumbs,
a tingling caressing my spine - mercy will be mine.
For in this dark place I am still owned by the light.
The torn shirt and the broken boots are only glass
under my foot that must penetrate
before they can be nicked and thrown aside.**

**I cry but I will not be crushed, for I have all
who I love secure by my side.**

A Change To Cherish

The days are changing
and so is the reliable reflection
I looked upon under scrutiny.
Gone is the waste bin of logical stress
and the appetite that never found its proper food.
Here is the chair I kneel upon,
looking beyond. Like all great things coming, change is
a handful of sand that must be chewed, ingested
and joined to the bloodstream.
The old disappears - a dew drop evaporating
in the hot rising noon.

Thunder To Cross

I fell, without colour, separated
from purpose - a delight to the
violence of mediocrity.

This character I have seen form
is on exhibition, it has gained
sanity but lost its genius.

The burning bodies of grief
lingering from house to house.

Pollution put under the tongue like cyanide.
I wore that slipper. I left what I held sacred
for a more tangible condition.

Gifted

Thrown into isolation - no need
for bread or even the gifts of summer.
That is all inside you - the Chinaglass dream
tarnished from age - the towering clouds,
never far enough to reach - the daughters
of loveless affection - the painted
patriarch of absolute control.

Your face has weaved a wonder
that the piled-up tissues of time cannot
obscure. For you, hope is
beautiful. To join is to be
elevated. But these acts are too large
for your darkness, too full of God to ever
own you with anything but longing.

In this way, you are modern,
destroyed by what you name sacred, diamond
but lacking all shine.

In this way, you are gorgeous, guided by
an obvious morality yet struggling with the sly and unholy -
lightning-struck with an anger that will never free you,
reaching out
beyond yourself for what
even angels are denied.

In The Thighs

**Blood in the thighs like
a bowling ball moving,
rotating, heavy, at high speed
up between the
hip bones, into the heart chamber.
Nothing can stop its weight and damage,
nothing can stop its motion.
The trees say "A different face of God is etched upon
my each and every leaf." But the beetle and ladybug
who eat the leaves do not care. And the person snipping
at branches does not care.
Through the thighs, moving
rotating, heavy, at high speed.
Call out to me
Call the number engraved into the armchair
He came like light washing over the many,
entering and cleansing only the few.
He came. He is
what everyone needs,
but the pavement is thick
and the ground beneath is rich,
saturated with worms,
moving,
thick
with worm motion
moving at worm speed.**

The Mind That Sings

The mind that sings
the stolen dream, remains
free from all that thievery.
I wait on tomorrow, though
I know life should be more
than waiting. So I paint
the cupboards in rainbow hues
and I speak the hidden part
to those I love, so no mistakes
will follow. I open doors I'd
rather close
just to trace an answer.

From Us Two

We give our time like you give
wild laughter
and full affection, fearless of rejection.
Two of paint and music,
of flashlight play and dress-up magic,
you are the ones we hold in the torrential rains, the smile
that comes regardless of the backyard trees that crash to
the ground - all wires touching pavement.
Two of everglade emotions,
of all-out tears and jealous eyes,
we bless you as we would the best in our lives.
You have made us closer -
caring for, rejoicing in
the effort and rag-time joy
that is the two of you.

The struggle of water

The wave takes
those under the drip-drain dream,
it carries them here
where language is clearer
but hope has died.
On the edge it tosses them -
from garbage pail to garbage pail,
a thousand miles sleeping.
It reforms without stealing - but not
without a price.

Five Days

Five days without belief,
lost like a pebble tossed into
a deep stream.
My prayers have turned grey, culled by
despair - there but not really there.
Every ghost has come in, crowding
my upper floors. In the wastebins, in the filing cabinets,
my hands have been scraped
and there they fell - two dead weights,
lacking the strength to be lifted.
Like something left out
of the fridge for too long, my taste has
been tainted. God is a soft echo in the open air.
I hear words, but words I cannot formulate
or beckon to come near.
Five sunsets in black and white.
Five days to give in and die or to hold tight
to the thread string, the little string,
the are-you-there?-string,
to hold on and commit to never return here
for all my days remaining.

Another Station

I raced to the perimeter,
stopping at the dot and
found the sun half-gone
like a kiss that never was.

I touched the tree and the tree
did not know I was there.

I peeled the skin from my fingers
to feel a deeper sensation.

The line and the ledge and the no-space in-between.

The devil is bitter and hard. I spoke to the devil
and held time with his eyes. But breaking free,
leaping from the circle - these aspirations
are growing up, taking long and slow breaths,
all the while, becoming
more formidable.

Exhumed

Hello dead flower,
for all time now you will
be embedded inside of me.
I will love you, dead as you are,
withered like a left-out tomato.
I will cherish you, your deadness,
your smell and deep dead colour.
There - the funny shadow on the upper
wall - you killed my sun.
You left me here leaking my joy
all over the sofa.
Hello my dead flower,
let be whatever is, let it please
resume.

I see the light I thought I lost

settling dimly on my child's cheek.
I cannot say the way is clear
or that I feel combined.
I still hold my hands in my pockets
and nothing has changed the flavour of my style.
But I see the light
like a dewdrop on a windowpane -
small, easily gone, but visible.
I know that light though it seems
so long since it bandaged my body
with its cotton scent, so long since
I disappeared into its brilliant certainty.
I love that light, the one I see - I love its power,
void of every cruelty.
I gaze into its small sphere.
I will let it reach me, rule over these desperate days
to call myself, once again,
blessed.

What I found

What I found is below,
out-of-sequence with the sun's
touch and possibilities,
is past redemption,
is in my gut, collapsing the core
of my sanity.

What I found is old, like the beginning
of cell growth, like the first imagination.

What I know is that it always wins,
in the settling moments, in the quiet
of a noonday stare.

What I feel is removed, blocked off by shadows -
a thousand years behind me.

The Stone

The stone drops,
settles in the sand like a beetle.
Lovers die
for lack of trying.
Children wait like they
always have
to be made a priority.
The sun is swollen and breaking
on the crust of the universe.
A fairytale in a box, barely opened,
but already stronger than reality.
A last chance stored-up for
old age.
People are falling,
glass doors are ajar.
Someone is listening but no one
even smiles.
That stone drops,
it is made up of hard,
unforgiving stuff.
It stays,
and the surface
is its meaning.

Regret

I should have held it in -
a nut within its shell,
prolonged its freshness to ward-off
its rotting. I wish I kept my breath,
said nothing until the hallucination passed
and I was hard again and not so
revealing. If I could swallow, quench my
emptiness, restore the day of mercy
then I would, but the strike has torn, though
it was meant to mend. And the night moves on
as sleep beckons me
further into isolation, lacking the promise
of rest or resolution.

Resolve

Burning in the middle
where the sickness gets in,
and my expression is foiled
by an inaudible aim.
Clouded like a bad fragrance
soaking into the pours, making it hard
to breathe. Hard to breathe in like
a petal crushed into a ball, or like a poem
with no testimony.
But I will not be taken in.
I will forge a path for my energy,
find new neighbours, something
unbroken to hold on to.

Take This!

Greed. Grief.

**Screaming in the vacant aftermath
where such a scream contains, then releases
the toxins, separates the truth from the immobilizing
confusion of evil.**

A smoke cloud of charred pride.

**The lie of worry, the torn pages
of prophecy laid out,
caught by the wind, carried
toward God as this scream is
carried - a boxed burden
waved high**

into a dull sky.

Heat

It will take me over,
toss me like a weather balloon
and put me on the brink of a high fever.
It will know me and place me
in hot water madness
like a tune just out of reach or a clothesline
pinned against a fence by overgrown branches.
It will take me into the drug store.
I will be spared nothing, but I will feel nothing
of pain or of thinning. Because
I was bribed by the demon and I released
the bribe, and with it, the demon. Because God is with me
like a black cat who follows me from station to station,
is gentle and existing with tenderness and solidarity.
The flies have left my rotted corner, and all that remains is
this sunflower.

Blind Spot

**Like a crack in the wall
that cannot be fixed or
a terrible loss that waxes and wanes
by varying degrees but never fully leaves.
It is the spot that will not heal,
found on the floor by the fallen curtain.**

**It reveals that faith does not
mean protection from the chaos of chance,
only that God will stand beside you
once that chance has marked you
blood splattered and cold.**

Without Soul

I felt the pressure between
my hands, drive through
my cortex and embrace
the tip of my brain with warmth.
It felt like fool's gold, fake
but still providing glitter.
I felt twisted with unknowing,
degutted of all things I hold sacred.
And that was a coat over my corpse,
pennies placed over my eyes. That was
for me, forging forward
with no significance, with no discernable
regrets.

Crossroads

From rumours
left unsaid
the day was raised
and laid out
like a tablecloth or like
someone's grand and meticulous day dreaming.

I never opened my mouth to alleviate the
darkness, but instead I took offence
at the lack in others, not seeing that offence
as my own withdrawal.
But I am changing. I am ending like childhood
ends, and I am
not so sure of myself
anymore.

Easter Faith

It is not emptiness,
but redemption. A redemption
after the emptiness
that comes with the hope of a blessing,
after there is no further down,
there is only up or death.
It is not suffering that bears such wisdom,
but the surrender and acceptance of God's love
no matter what - it is the purity of that acceptance,
the absoluteness of it
that matters, that causes the miracle -

playing out like a walk across the sun
without going blind or getting burned.

Days that dismantle

Days that dismantle

the thrones

of 'may I?' 'give me'

and 'I deserve'

Days that hold the devil at bay

and pinch the flowers off every lapel,

of angels under the bed sheets

and smiles in the afternoons,

of dreams that form, fade, then form

again. Days I will try to treasure like a

jar full of fireflies,

when I will not give in, not

give space to the dark pit within.

Days that mean more than money, and more

than the power that it yields.

Looking Up

The ninth vortex,
a cylinder, funnelling
the puss from the unhealable wound.
A point of Juno - tell me,
you are drowning.
Your throat is tight, but your body
is hoping. There is no pain you
can give that will reduce me because
I am safe in the pain, and not destroyed.
But the harshness that eats the colour from
your eyes is consuming a part of me too.
I blend with the stone. I die in the shrubbery
of your fear. So long, winged-worm.
So long, wind that dust clouds my ground.
I am ripe for renewal.
I am solo - past you, past death -
planting light where once
there was only blindness.

Choice.

I will sink your boat and struggle
with your scaly arms.
I will not let your hot sea swallow me
or let the light I earned from the birds
be extinguished in the deadness of your embrace.
One time, I was gentle with myself.
I took the remedy and widened my path.
Then you, with your ashen red-soul minions, ripped
the blood from my throat and I have been lying
here ever since, a victim - not the woman
I was made. I am not fragile, but I am of the sun
and of the darkness and I know the pure joy
of home. I cast you from my heart,
you who stole my fire, left me
weak-kneed and dependent upon an outer outcome.

Guide me down the shaft of this axle,
let my strength rise, dependent on only you.
I am not a single voice, ghostly in the darkness. I am
your servant - let me serve you - release me
from this fatalism, this consuming toxic tar.
Stand by my window, I will fight to save myself -
it will be just you and me at the bottom
of this grave and the demons I allowed in
and allowed to conquer.
At the bottom of this grave, I will cling to you.
Raise me up. I promise, my part will be played -
I won't let go.

In My Corner

**Kneel to the weather. There is a fountain up ahead,
glowing,**

**but no one is on my deck - no bones are dry
in my pocket. Criss-cross, betrayal in my juice cup.**

Magic is for fools. Living here, my voice cut,

my pet octopus drowned. Living here

in elementary wealth - nothing but

old-world, nothing but chaos.

**Will the angels sing to me? I have been waiting
on their love.**

So heavy is the window I look through. Brick by brick

I count my way up. My memories belong

to another world.

Nothing

Nothing is wasted - not
time deposited into an illusion that
never was, not love laid out
like a sliced fruit, taken, then
spat back out - so utterly tasted and
so utterly refused.

Nothing is wasted, not women
counting the babies that once graced their arms,
now grown and gone, so rarely showing
tenderness or need -
not men who were babes, who were once able
to weep and were able to treat all with
unquestioned equality.

Nothing is wasted, not years spent in ambiguity
walking hospital halls, years of blood tests
and ultrasounds, offering no cure or
nameable disease.

Nothing is wasted - not poverty, not wealth,
not death, not grief.

Nothing is wasted if held out to God
held out, naked on a bed, under
the cracked ceiling.

Trap

Hours near the composers,
full nights healing through slumber.
The cavity within is like gasoline
spilled on water, expanding, making rainbow
poisonous hues.
Many times I thought I was free, but still
I was driven by obsession, metaphysical but
destructive, driven to explore that which cloaks
a form but never reveals a face.
Tempted, in an old land, wasting time. Because
my fountain has lost its theme,
it drips without flow, without gusto.
I allow myself to be extravagant
where I should be frugal, losing
my energy like blood into the tiger's expanding jaws.
I allow myself to be reigned by addiction -
each hand moving the demon-stone, surging with
desperation, red and pulsing for relief.
Cold endurance. Cold hours in the morning when
I am left alone with myself, forced to discipline
this phantom monster. It is hard not to get absorbed
in its other-worldly folds. It is hard
to hold tight
to my personal religion.

Let The Joy In

**What you gave at an age
when you thought thievery was long dispelled.
What was given back was cold and hard as a stone
in wintertime, betrayal without audition,
without remorse.
Click the door, be sure in your sunshine -
what was lost was never had - purity
and courage were not on the agenda, never
graced the soul of one so cruel. Show your
sword and cut the toxin from your torso,
look into its eyes and then be done with it forever.
There is no need to understand why,
no benefit in an explanation. Everything is choice.
You chose to lie on the field so Christ
would lay hands on you in your torment.
You chose the meditation floor,
symbols to support your painful transformation.
Everything else is small. The past is small.
The grave is small. Only love survives and what is not love
has no place in your beautiful heart.
What isn't love, never breathed to begin with.
You need no protection. You need only
what you have.**

Perfect Home

Cut into the light,
divide it like the months
spent underground where
secrets and conspiracies flourish.
Snap up the fruit before the roots
are culled, and drink the water
after a long walk, take in
and sense the true blessing all around you,
the blessing of soulmate love, of the vision
you sought, realized. This is your offering,
your recording. Weave your joy
through the stark-heart of survival
and watch it
be warmed.

Tomorrow

I open myself to the obsidian stone.

It is too much to lose myself in its
shiny warm darkness, so I press it
to my heart, I press my private light
into its own greenish dark sheen.

Love is coming. Like a tree in the winter wind
of twilight, it speaks to me. It charms my wound,
sings to me of abundance. Love is
on my doorstep, like a fully-fed child, giggling
at the playing squirrels.

Thank you morning for finally arriving.

It has been so cold. And these frostbite talismans
will be mine forever. But grace is no longer
a ghost, but something pure and solid, something I can
swallow. Grace has made its way inside and
the bells of welcoming relief
are ringing, ringing.

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in:
 Buddhist Poetry Review; Fogged Clarity; Right Hand Pointing; cur.ren.cy;
 Bewildering Stories; B-Gina Review; Subliminal Interiors; Message in a Bottle; Iron
 Gall Press; Carcinogenic Poetry; Dead Snakes; Crack the Spine (magazine and
 anthology); Boston Poetry Magazine; Kritya Poetry Journal; Guwahatian; The
 Continuist; The Bijou Poetry; Long Story Short; Iron Gall Press; Spilt Ink
 Poetry; Agave Magazine; Smashed Cake Review (Sideral Journal);
 Verse Wrights; Profiles in Poetry Literary Zine; Synchronized Chaos; East
 Jasmine Review; Ginosko Literary Journal; Rocket Boy Poetry Page; Dali's
 Lovechild; BigCityLit; Clockwise Cat; Vine Figure Poetry Page; 1947, a literary
 journal; SilverSpine Poetry Forum; Mechanical Medusa Poetry Forum;
 above/ground press; Eye On Life Magazine; Indie Poets Indeed; Stone Face
 Literary Zine; Mount Parable Poetry Forum; Inscribed Museum Literary Zine;
 Rusted Rose Poetry Forum; The Writers Newsletter; PoetryMagazine; SpinRock
 Reader Lit Forum; The Peregrine Muse; The Syzygy Poetry Journal; Antarctica
 Journal; Minerva's Housecoat Writing Forum; GloMag; Winamop; Dark
 Blooms Literary Zine; Tangerine Heart Poetry Zine; New Mystics; Eos – The
 Creative Context; Cacti Fur; Bluepepper; Dog Is Wearing Pants Literary Page;
 ArtVilla; Lunar Lit Poetry Page; Firefly Magazine; The Octopus Review;
 Dissident Voice; Green King Poems and Poetry Zine; Straylight Literary
 Magazine; Sonic Boom; A New Ulster; The Galway Review; Medusa's Kitchen;
 Upender; Tuck Magazine

About the Author



Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three of her poems were nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2015, and one eight-part story-poem was nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2017. She has over 1,125 poems published in more than 450 international journals and anthologies. Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcupine Book, in Vancouver in 1995. Since then she has published fifteen other books of poetry and six collections with Edge Unlimited Publishing. Prior to the publication of *Somewhere Falling* she had a poetry book published, *Common Dream*, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman. Her poetry chapbook *The River is Blind* was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press December 2012. In 2014 her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series. In 2015, her book *No Raft – No Ocean* was published by Scars Publications. More recently, her book *Make the Wind* was published in 2016 by Scars Publications. As well, her book *Trial and Witness – selected poems*, was published in 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed (CTU Publishing Group).

Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album. "River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst" released October 2017.

Allison Grayhurst is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; www.allisongrayhurst.com

Contact the author:

allisongrayhurst@rogers.com

www.allisongrayhurst.com



“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader’s personal involvement. Grayhurst’s poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance,” Kyp Harness, singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of Wigford Rememberies, Nightwood Editons; www.kypharness.net

“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst's work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst's poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett's Quotations, lines such as "I drink necessity's authority." Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst's work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water,” Taylor Jane Green, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of *Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology* and *The Rise of Eros*.

"Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is ... the poetry of Allison Grayhurst," *Blaise Wigglesworth*, *Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice*.

"Grayhurst's poetry is a translucent, ethereal dream in which words push through the fog, always searching, struggling, and reaching for the powerful soul at its heart. Her work is vibrant and shockingly original," *Beach Holme Publishers*.

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born," *Anne Burke*, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.

"Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry," *Eric M. Vogt*, poet and author.

"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. Grayhurst's poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis*, poet, novelist and educator.

“When I read Allison Grayhurst's poetry, I am compelled by the intensity and strength of her spirituality. Her personal experience of God drives her poetry. With honesty and vulnerability, she fleshes out the profound mystery of knowing at once both the beauty and terror of God's love, both freedom and obedience, deep joy and sorrow, both being deeply rooted in but also apart from the world, and lastly, both life and death. Her poems undulate through these paradoxes with much feeling and often leave me breathless, shaken. Allison Grayhurst's poems are both beautiful and difficult to behold,” *Anna Mark*, poet and teacher.

“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry has a tribal and timeless feeling, reminiscent of the Biblical commentary in Ecclesiastes,” *Cristina Deptula*, editor of *Synchronized Chaos*.

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader's personal involvement. Grayhurst's poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance," Kyp Harness, singer/songwriter, author of *Wigford Rememberies*.



Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four times nominated for "Best of the Net", 2015/2017, she has over 1125 poems published in over 450 international journals and anthologies. She has 21 published books of poetry, six collections and six chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay.

Barcode Area

We will add the barcode for you.

Made with Cover Creator